"SAVING THE SOUND LIMITED," BY ALVAH MILTON KERR, NEXT WEEK!

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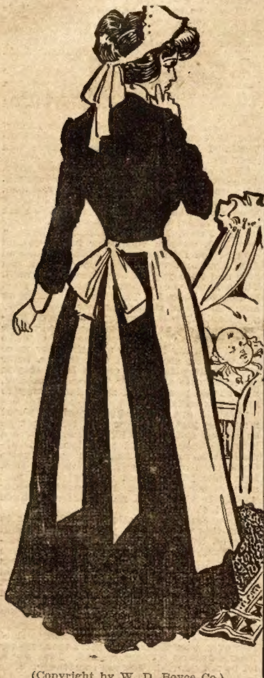
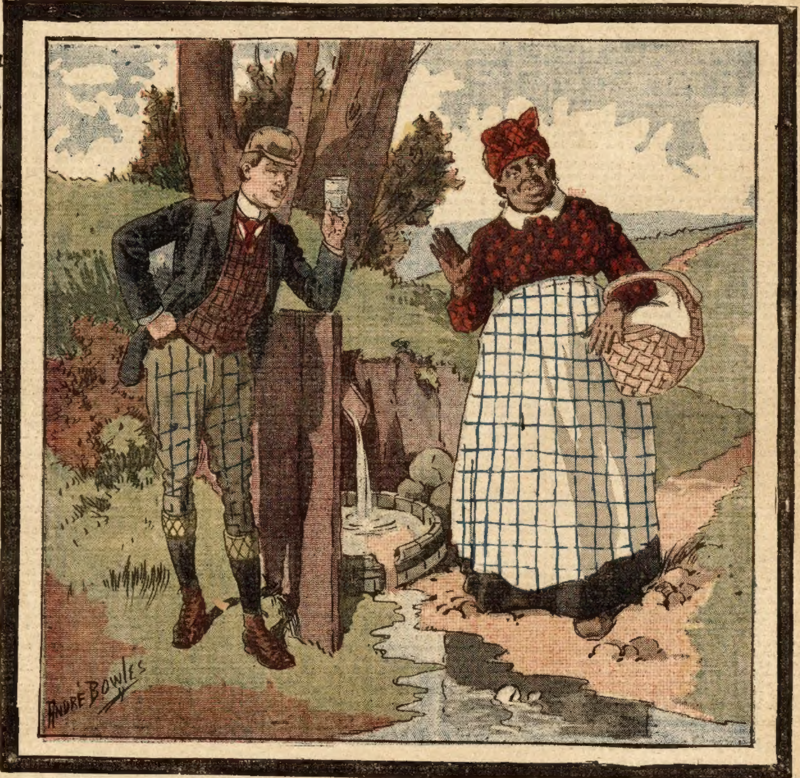
THE LEPER'S FATE; Or, A Tragedy in High Life.

By HELENA BALLARD WHITE.





"Ole Chloe tell you, deh ain't no ghost heah!"

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CHAPTER I.

"Be kind, Doctor Ellis, do not have me banished to such an existence," pleaded a woman as she went deadly white and sank back heavily on the couch. "Merciful God! what a fate! If I am forced to die by inches in this way, if there is no help, no hope at all, for sweet pity's sake, let me go where I may be alone in my misery—where I shall not be compelled to look upon such hideous, such revolting sights. They can only intensify and mock my suffering. It fills me with sickness and horror even to think of these poor creatures! Oh! are you positive that you are making no mistake, Doctor? Are you right in the diagnosis of my case?"

"There can be no question as to that, my dear woman. I have made a special study of this malady and you have all the symptoms of leprosy," answered the doctor. He motioned to her right arm. "There is no feeling in that—it is perfectly numb. You are part dead now. It will soon be in the other limbs, all over you, in fact."

She shuddered and drew away from him.

"You think I speak coldly," he went on, "but I find it necessary. When one is a leper he must know, the sooner the better, that he may not wrong humanity. When it reaches your face you will be assured. However, that will not be for some time."

"Oh, dear God! what madness! what torture!" cried the woman, now clapping her hands to her face and sinking to a chair, where she wept hysterically. After a few moments she sprang up excitedly.

"My child! my child! Do you think, Doctor, it has inherited this curse?"

"No, my dear, of that you may be assured. The disease you have undoubtedly taken from the nurse, whom I have just sent to the leper colony, and the child being puny has saved it from the contagion, since it has been left at the hospital. It is well that I did not bring it to the house as you insisted upon my doing."

"Thank God that it is spared!" murmured the wretched woman. "It seems no matter how great their sufferings, human beings have generally something for which they may be thankful. And she is healthy now and doing well, Doctor?"

"She is as fine as silk. A beautiful babe. It is fortunate that I have made this discovery in time. They were going to send the child to you tomorrow."

"Ah! what misery, what misery is mine! What misery it must be to any mother never to be enabled to look upon her child. But I may, I may see her once—just once, Doctor. You can manage this?"

"Why, yes, I suppose so. You know the danger of the contagion lies only in the touch. I can have the nurse bring the babe and stand outside the window where you may look upon it, if you think that will be any consolation."

"Oh, thank you, Doctor, I thank you! Yes; I must—I must see my child before I go and hide myself forever from human faces. It will be like taking a peep into sweet Paradise only to be hurled back to writhe with the poor damned souls of the Inferno. But I must take that one look—I must see her—my little Marcia. Oh, to think I shall never know her love, nor she mine! How can I bear the thought! From hence I am no one—nothing—nothing but a lump of partially vitalized clay, crumbling by inches."

"Do not take it so to heart, my dear woman. When it comes to that, you are not so different from the rest of humanity. We all go to decay, but by a different process. Yours, perhaps, is the worst form that falls to the lot of man. There are, however, a few ailments only a step removed, to my way of thinking. Cancer is as loathsome, and tuberculosis isn't so much better. The fellow who drowns or drops dead of heart disease, is to be envied, not pitied."

"Ah! but what human beings can suffer and still live! Why does not this horrible revelation kill me outright! Can I ever grow used to the thought? Shall I ever become reconciled, Doctor?"

"The chances are that you will. People accommodate themselves to circumstances to a marvelous degree. But now about this—this removal of yours. Of course, you must know that it would place me in a very bad light and ruin my practice not to make your case known to the authorities."

"Oh, but Doctor, be merciful! be merciful! I shall hide myself away and be as free from giving this disease to any living soul as though I were banished to the colony. I know it is asking much, but I shall reward you—I shall reward you, Doctor! I have wealth! Take half my fortune! For a million dollars to be paid at once, you can do this. You can manage to procure a body and give it burial from the house here in place of my own. Then hide me away in some remote corner with a few thousand dollars with which to supply my wants until the end. No face save Chloe's shall henceforth look upon my own. Chloe is faithful. She swears she will not forsake me. It can be arranged so that she need not come in contact with me, yet I may have her to serve me, do my errands, that no eyes may see my hideousness. Promise, promise that you will do this—this much for me, Doctor."

"Well, it is a question too serious to decide quickly, my poor woman. I will take a few hours in which to think the matter over and return this evening to let you know. Of course, a guardian must be appointed for the child. That might bring some awkward disclosures," subtly added the doctor.

"And why so? Why could I not avoid all publicity by appointing you its guardian? I know of no one whom I would so soon trust with my child's welfare and happiness."

"I hadn't thought of that. Let me thank you, my dear, for the confidence which you place in me. Should I decide to take this charge, however, know that your trust shall not be abused. I'll think it over and decide by this evening. You had better call Chloe now and swear her to secrecy, then take a sleeping potion which I shall leave. Your mind as well as your body needs rest. Your nerves are in a bad way. I am sorry for you, my poor girl, and shall do what I can to aid you, you may be assured." With this, the doctor reached for his hat, and bidding his patient good morning, walked quickly to his carriage.

The woman, or girl, for she was barely nineteen, decided not to take the powder which the physician had left. For although the thoughts conflicting her mind all but crazed her, she must be alive to the situation, she must have all her faculties awake, she must think upon her child's future and make arrangements for its welfare. So with the old colored mammy in her confidence, she spent the entire day talking, weeping, praying, and planning.

Toward evening the wretched woman stood at the window watching for the doctor's return. She had not long to wait. Soon she saw his horse and the dilapidated carriage ascending the hill. As he drove into the dooryard she discovered that he was not alone.

"Merciful God! be praised! 'Tis the nurse with my child! I am to see my babe—my precious babe!" she cried, joyfully to Chloe, as the latter hurried to the window.

Stepping on to the veranda, the doctor took the child in his arms and removed the shawl from around it and the veil from the little face. A beautiful baby girl, a dainty but plump and healthy-looking child, was now held up for the mother's inspection and admiration.

"It has its father's fine hazel eyes! Ah! what a treasure, and what a heaven might be mine! God be merciful, 'tis more than I can bear! My heart is breaking—breaking! Do you hear? Do you——"

Ere she had finished, the poor sufferer sank to the floor. With returning consciousness she moaned:

"Why did you not let me go? Why try to revive a wretch like me? To what do you bring me back—torture, unceasing torture! If there is beyond a worse hell than a leper colony, what a fiendish mind must have conceived it! Death—sweet death—oblivion! Pray God it may come soon!"

Several months had passed since this painful scene between Doctor Ellis and his leper patient. In the meantime, many changes had taken place:

Supposedly, the body of the young and beautiful Mrs. Bourne had been carried to her grave, with much mourning by her servants and the residents of Tower Hill, a small town pitched on the high bluffs of one of the Great Lakes. The death coming so unexpectedly, caused much surprise and comment. It created wider comment still, when Doctor Ellis, a struggling physician, moved into the beautiful mansion that had been bequeathed to him by the deceased. A few weeks later, the babe, Marcia, with its nurse, was lodged with him. When it was learned that as much as a million had also been left to the doctor, a romance was speedily woven. It became rumored that the widow had fallen in love with the seedy-looking physician, and at her death had left him her property and her child in his care.

Far out on the country road, almost hidden among the jagged rocks, the colored woman, Chloe, had found a home in a deserted hut. Little was thought of this since she was growing old, and having been left some means by her mistress, she expressed the wish to spend the rest of her days in ease. Of the sad-eyed, white-faced woman locked within, the world knew nothing. In one sense, the beautiful Alice Bourne was indeed buried.

"I am a deucedly lucky man," the doctor confided to himself, as he strolled among his possessions. His mansion stood quite alone on the high bluff since many acres of the wild land about were included in the estate. Back beyond the wooded hills was the deer park and the hunting grounds stocked with game, the former possessor having been quite a sportsman.

"How little one can count upon in this world," mused the doctor. "Less than a year ago, a young couple took up their summer residence in this place. Both were teeming with life and health and youth and all the happiness that love and wealth can bring. Today both are buried—one under the ground, one on top—and their possessions are in the hands of a stranger; one who, then, was little better off than a beggar. Well, what has placed me here? What has given me all this ease, this luxury and comfort? Labor? Have I earned it by dint of hard labor? Ah, yes, yes," he laughed, softly. "Labor of the mind; active mental labor has brought me to this tropic of my dreams. Some are pleased to call it luck. The luck lies in the fact that I happened to be called on the case. Thought did the rest. What one calls luck must ever be backed by brains. One million and this fine estate! That should be enough to satisfy any one! But here I find myself hankering for the entire fortune, and hoping the youngster will not live. In the event of its death, I am to have the other million. Gads! How the thought sets me aglow! I expected to see it turn up its toes with the croup last night, but no such luck! This morning it was as lively as a cricket. It were an easy matter to have finished its choking. Many a man in my place would have done so. But, no; there is where I hesitate—like a fool, no doubt. I am squeamish of taking human life. Yes; I am deucedly shaky about this. I never knew of a single instance where one enjoyed a moment's happiness after having committed such a crime. All confessions of criminals show this. There is ever the horror of being found out, with the gallows constantly staring one in the face. Yes; a million should satisfy any reasonable person, especially a pauper like myself. But here I am, like a few other human hyenas, ready to pounce upon innocent prey in order to swell my already fat wallet; and like the rest, after once getting the idea into my head, I am enabled to think of little else. A hundred times have I put the thought from me, and as many times has it reoccurred."

His meditations were interrupted by the nurse who now approached with the young heiress in her arms.

"How is the youngster by this time, Annette?" asked the doctor.

"As spry as a young jack rabbit, sir."

"Had it died last night I should be a million dollars ahead this morning," he casually remarked.

"In that case, you are not so pleased with its state of health, Doctor," said the maid, giving him a sly glance.

"I am but human, Annette."

"Then I am surprised that you made any effort to save its life."

"I did not especially—you were the physician, Annette; nurse and physician in one."

"But you love the child, Doctor?"

"Not particularly. I have no reason for doing so. You see, it stands in my way."

"You certainly loved the mother. At least I always thought so, just as does every one."

"No; you are again mistaken. All this talk about my infatuation for the beautiful young widow, is moonshine. 'Tis true she cared a bit for me, and thinking that I was an honorable man, entrusted her child to my keeping, remunerating me for my trouble in a very liberal way."

"Well, then," said the nurse, as she shifted the babe to the other arm and looked sharply at the man before her. "I don't understand. A bit of squirming flesh like this standing between you and a million dollars! Fatherless, motherless, it were better dead a thousand times! It would have died, choked to death with the croup last night had you not given it the medicine."

"And had I not, what would you have thought, Annette?"

"Why, I should have had no business to think at all, had you given me, say, a few paltry thousands."

"You are a shrewd one, Annette. But I supposed that you cared a great deal for the youngster."

"Humph! It's a pretty thing; yet, if a thousand-dollar note is within my clutch, I cannot afford to let it go for a little sentiment."

"Yes, yes," said the doctor, dryly, "so the greed of gain is ever an enemy to principle! But I couldn't take the child's life, Annette, nor must you. I have a certain prejudice toward a thing of this sort!"

"You surprise me, I thought you had more sense, Doctor."

"All the same, I believe in a future existence, Annette. This is not the only life. To kill for money, with a chance of exposure in this life and the devil to pay in the next, is bad business."

"Pshaw! your belief is all rot, Doctor Ellis. You will pardon me, but here you are letting a handful of moonshine stand between you and a million dollars!"

"No; I am right in this, my girl. I have given the matter much thought. I could never be persuaded to take human life. Not that I am too good, I suppose, but because I think the wrong would be avenged through some means."

"But if the child should again fall ill, Doctor, and you failed to give relief?"

"Well, we shall see about that. You are a clever one, Annette, and would probably haul me in as an accomplice or demand half my money to help you out of the scrape. Positively, the child's death must not occur unless from natural causes, and since these human things are stubborn about living when they happen to be in the way, I suppose the brat will continue to thrive like a wayside thistle. Now, I have a better arrangement, a wiser plan, and if I could swear you to secrecy, you might be in possession of ten thousand without taking a life."

"I am ready to aid you, Doctor. You can trust me. For the sum of ten thousand dollars I shall do your bidding, whatever it is, and take oath that I will not betray you."

"I might as well tell you that there is just one condition on which I should kill. For I should feel justified. I would kill a man or a woman who would betray me! You must know what you are promising, and with whom you are dealing."

"You can trust me, you can trust me, Doctor. I will be your tool, your slave, your faithful watch-dog!"

"Well, then, listen. On the top floor of the mansion I have discovered a passage to a secret chamber. For what purpose it was ever built, I cannot say. Its walls are so deadened there can be no possible communication with the outer world. It is feebly lighted by a small skylight, and that is barred over. A dead man in a vault could give as much sign of life as one entombed in this chamber. By the merest accident I happened upon it. But that matters not. Now you see the drift of my thoughts. The child could be secreted there. You could give it sufficient food to sustain life and leave it to itself absolutely. It will become an imbecile. As an imbecile it can later be turned loose upon the world in safety. It can tell no tales. The past will be a blank. The memory, having nothing to record, will be like a blank page."

Even the flinty heart of the French maid tightened a bit to hear the man before her talk in this inhuman way.

"You are misguided, Doctor Ellis. It wouldn't be half the crime to take the child's life that it would be to let it live on in this way."

"Understand, Annette. It is not the crime that I care about. It is the horror of ever being held for murder. I am thinking only of myself—of my own neck. You see, should you ever take it into your head to expose the crime, it would mean capital punishment for me, had I only imprisoned the child. Imprisonment for life has for me no terrors compared with capital punishment. Then, I think there is not a prison from which I could not escape."

"Have your way, Doctor, I am ready to lend you my assistance. But if you are going to do this thing, it should be done at once, before the child begins to learn and imitate. They pick up very fast when once they have a start. Show me the room. Put in my hands the ten thousand dollars and I shall attend to the rest. But what account will you give of the youngster's disappearance?"

"Oh, that can be easily arranged. I know where to find a child that cannot possibly live longer than a few days. It is just about the age of this one. It is on a farm some four miles north, where I was called on yesterday. After it is buried I can secure the body and bring it here. You can dress it in this babe's clothes, wail over it, so as to hoodwink the servants, and we will have a speedy burial."

"My, but you have a clear head, Doctor. Very well, I shall at once declare the child dangerously ill of scarlet fever and you can order the servants not to peep their heads into the nursery."

CHAPTER II.

Ten years had passed since the fiendish little doctor, aided by the French maid, determined upon this method of ridding themselves of the young heiress to the Bourne estate. In the meantime, the doctor traveled extensively, and the maid who was left mistress of the mansion greatly enjoyed her position and her freedom and entertained her friends in a lavish manner. The under servants she treated with marked disdain; a king with his vassals could not be more imperious. It all came to a sudden end, however, when the doctor returned unannounced, after many years' absence. He had with him his nephew, a Yale graduate, whom he had invited for the hunting season. A number of friends from the East were to join them later. The doctor had given up his practice and had now little acquaintance among the residents of the region. His fortune had made him a trifle exclusive, and none but strangers visited his home. His friends whom he invited for the hunting season, delighted in the wildness of his country home, and the deer park, extending over many acres around, was a great source of pleasure.

The young man whom he had brought back with him was very attractive to the French maid. She immediately declared him a reincarnated Apollo; and her thousands having set her up a bit, she shyly commenced a flirtation with the handsome and polished guest. Being a very pretty girl, and looking for all the amusement going, the nephew, Justin Holbrook, was not slow in understanding the smiles of the chic-looking maid, and was soon on very good terms with her.

His uncle's sudden accumulation of wealth had never been explained to Justin, and since the doctor seemed to avoid the subject, his nephew had not pressed him for an explanation. It remained for the French maid to enlighten him. She stated that a wealthy young widow who was wildly infatuated with the doctor, and whom he expected to marry, died before the nuptial ceremony was to be performed and left him her possessions.

"Ye gods, what luck some people have!" drawled the youth. "Another man might knock around the world for a full century and nothing of this sort would fall to his lot."

"Your uncle having so much, though, will probably start you in business," said Annette, never for a moment believing that he would do so.

"Pshaw! any day you catch that old miser dividing his spoils, I'll declare the sun does not shine, water does not flow, there is no night, there is no day, my belief in everything will be upset. My dear relative would as soon cut his throat as to hand a fellow a five-dollar bill. No, I'll manage to get a start somehow, and since money is not my god, I shall get on well enough, no doubt. I am going to knock around here until autumn, then I am going to take up the profession of medicine myself. I have already given it some attention."

"Pouf! Do something unique—something that will make you money fast without such slavery," laughed the maid. "You are a good subject; you might open a beauty parlor—for men, I mean. I find that men are quite as vain of their looks as are the women. I say, you would win out in a business of this sort. You could pomade, paint, perfume, parade yourself on the lecture platform, and have the whole world of fashion at your feet, with your share of its goodies, and in a very short time. Just think how long it will take you to get along in the medical profession, and what a dog's life it is, after all."

At this little irony of the maid's, Justin laughed outright.

"You are a great one, Annette. This is perhaps a happy suggestion of yours, but hardly along my line. I would prefer to use a pick-ax, should I be forced to take my choice."

"Well, then, you might happen on to some woman with money who would fall in love with you, as did your uncle. You, with your good looks, should find it an easy matter."

"Yes; but very likely she wouldn't be obliging enough to die," said Justin, lazily. "Then it might interest you to know, Annette, that I am not looking for anything of the sort. I am not a fortune-hunter. I'd sooner throw myself to the sharks than to marry a woman for her possessions. No one but a cur—no one but a foreigner, can do this. It is an industry which we Americans are perfectly willing to leave to that class."

"But suppose you loved the woman; you would not expect her to give her all to charity or throw it in the sewer, when you married her, would you?"

"Certainly not. But I should want her to wait until I, myself, had accumulated enough funds with which to keep her."

"In the meantime, some other fellow might carry her off; she might tire of waiting. The modern woman isn't very patient along that line, you know."

"The woman whom I should marry would have more force of character, Annette."

"Well, you seem to have very high ideas about this thing, Mr. Justin, but my advice to you is, if you find a woman whom you could love and at the same time would give you a start in life, why jump at the chance. These things do not come to one every hour of the day."

"You may be right, Annette; but natures vary so greatly, it is useless for us to discuss this matter further."

"You will pardon me, Mr. Justin, but I must. Now, suppose you wished to marry me, and you should learn that I had considerable wealth. Would you expect me to give it up, should you marry me?"

"Marry you—you, Annette? Why, great Caesar's ghost! How did you ever get such an idea as that into your cranium? And where did you ever get any money?"

"It matters not; I am worth twenty thousand. I have ten now, and ten more falls due within another year. As to how I came by it, that is my secret, Mr. Justin."

"Upon my life, is there actually one woman possessed of a secret which she has not divulged?"

"Don't try to be funny, Mr. Justin. It is not good taste, and there is nothing new or original in that thought, you know. So you wouldn't take me and twenty thousand?"

"No; not you and twenty million. Most assuredly not."

"You have been making the most ardent love to me, Mr. Justin Holbrook, yet you dare say that you should not marry me."

"Call it love, if you will, Annette; I should express it differently."

"So I am a woman scorned! Do you know what that means? Have a care, Justin Holbrook. I hate you for your insolence and your treachery."

"My, what a beautiful temper you have, Annette. You have missed your calling. You would make an ideal tragedy queen. You have a temper that would lay old Lady Macbeth in the shade any day. So you are the proverbial worm, trodden upon."

"Oh, Justin Holbrook, but you have a way with women, with your fine eyes and curl of the lip over your white teeth, and fine legs and shoulders. A woman can love and hate you all in the same moment. These handsome fellows do not make good husbands, though. They are ever seeking admiration and seldom bestow any. I say you wouldn't make any woman a good husband, but even at that, you shall never have [illegible]. Since you have trifled with my innocent affections for mere pastime you shall learn that it was, after all, serious play. I'll see to it that you never become any other woman's husband, and should you dare, I shall find a way to make you suffer."

"Well, I am not caring especially about marrying just now, Annette; but don't be so vicious and talk so like a fool. I have a lurking suspicion that your innocent affections have been tampered with more times than one, somewhere along the line. Nor have you suffered greatly from any sense of moral nausea. Eyes more devoutly willing to be blind, I must confess, I have never looked into."

"How dare you, Justin Holbrook, talk to me in this way! I say, you will regret, and bitterly, this treatment! I am not a common hireling! I have money. I do not have to accept a menial position. I have reasons for being in your uncle's employ, that you can never know. You young beggar student should look up to a woman like me instead of despising me!"

"Why, Annette, how you talk! I do not despise you. In your place, you are a pretty fine girl, I'll admit. Exceptionally fine! However, you manage to get unpardonably insane notions into your head. But, come, let us not quarrel. Tell me something. Who is the strange creature that I met in the wood the other evening, several miles down the road. As I approached, she let out a yell that would have done credit to a savage, and ran like a deer to the ravine where she hid behind some trees. Did you ever see her, or hear of her before?"

"No; I never saw her, but the folks about here do say that they have seen a spirit after night, flitting around in the trees back of the hut—the old colored mammay's hut—down in the ravine. They tell how a young girl threw herself off the cliff some forty years ago, near that place because of a lover's quarrel, and her spirit frequently haunts the ravine. I have never paid much attention to the report, because there are a lot of crazy people outside the asylums with visions running through their cracked brain, and the doctor says that half the people in the village are daffy. He laughs at the absurdity of their fancies and would laugh at you for saying that you saw such an object."

"That does not matter, Annette, nor alter the situation in the least. I saw a woman and she gave every evidence that she was alive and an earthly production. She acted just as would any woman had a snake suddenly crept by in her path, or a highwayman presented himself."

"I suppose you will be looking her up and making love to her," said the jealous maid. "Something spiritual is more along your line."

At this remark, Justin laughed good-naturedly. "Oh, you are amusing, Annette. But don't get back to that subject. We have had some pleasant times together, so let's play quits in a friendly way."

"Bah! don't talk to me; do not talk to me about friendship, Justin Holbrook! From this hour I hate you! Your affair and mine, while it may seem trifling to you, means much, so much to me! Why, all the help have believed that you were madly in love with me and that I would speedily become the haughty doctor's niece. It would serve him right! He would be forced to look up to me!"

"Well, I should like to be obliging and help you out, Annette, but you see——"

"Have done with your sarcasm, Justin Holbrook. I will have no more of it, and listen, while I explain my position. When the doctor is away, I am mistress of Eagle Nest, and the help all wait upon me just as though I were a princess. Immediately on his return, I am made to feel my menial position in his household, for he treats me no better than he does the scullery maid. Him

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I despise, as I do you! I hate these aristocrats who think they have been created better than others. That part of the world has been created solely to serve them! He was a worse beggar than myself when I met him. He didn't have the price of a hair-cut. Now, he lords it over me like some crown prince, and I know, too—I know——"

"Why do you remain here, Annette, feeling so?"

"Why do I remain here? Ask the doctor, perhaps he may tell you. He had better have a care—he had better have a care!"

"Annette, I am beginning to think that yours is really a vicious nature. Curb your temper, girl, curb your temper and learn to keep your place. Do not let the possession of a few paltry thousands set you on such a dangerous pinnacle. You are apt to tumble off and break your fool neck some day!"

With this, the young man turned and strode leisurely away, leaving the maid mumbling to herself and swearing vengeance.

Feeling interested in the supposed myth of the ravine, Justin, when night had fallen, decided to take a stroll toward the old hut. He had often stopped to talk to the colored mammy, who generally sat on the low stoop crooning to herself, and he now determined to cultivate her acquaintance.

"I can't believe that any mortal escaping from this sea of trouble would ever be foolish enough to wander back again. That the strange creature whom I saw is a flesh and blood creation, I am thoroughly convinced," were the thoughts that Justin confided to himself as he sauntered along.

As he approached the hut, he found the colored woman on the outside, but as he neared, she hurriedly rose and went inside. Having his plan thus disarranged, he passed on for a mile or so, then retraced his steps. Upon again nearing the hut, his eye chanced upon the same white-robed figure that he had seen before, walking in the ravine.

"I shall be careful not to startle her this time," he murmured. "From behind the boulder here I can watch her movements. Ah, she rises, she brushes a wrinkle from her gown and arranges a stray lock of hair as would any fastidious summer girl. How devilishly pale she is—looks ethereal, without a doubt. I would like to get a little nearer. Upon my soul, she is walking straight into the hut! She must belong there, and no one seems to know of her, while all know about the old black mammy. Here is a charming mystery to unravel. I'll walk on to the hut and ask how many [illegible] it is to yonder little town on the south. I promised to return by nine o'clock for billiards, but what matters it."

A gentle rap at the front door of the cabin failed to bring any response, so the next knock was greatly emphasized.

"Who's dar?" came a voice from within.

"A friend, Mammy Chloe, who wants to ask the way and refresh himself with a glass of water. I am the doctor's nephew."

At this the bolt flew back and the old negress cautiously peeped out.

"Sho truff, honey, it's you. I'se glad ter see you, Marse Justin. How am de doctah?"

"Oh, he is all right, Mammy; may I come inside?"

"It am dat hot, chile, jes' you wait a minute 'til I fetch a glass. You kin git a cool drink dar at de spring. I'll show you, Marse Justin. De weathah am gittin' dat wahm; come 'long now, Mammy Chloe'll show you de way."

"Thanks, you're a good soul, Chloe. I am sorry to trouble you, but, you see, I've got to walk to the town south here. My saddle horse has a bad foot and the guests of Eagle Nest are making use of the others. How many miles is it, Mammy? A very sick man has sent for Doctor Ellis, but you know he never calls on any except a few old and wealthy patients, and I concluded to go and see what I could do for him."

"Po' man, it am too bad, Marse Justin. How fah am it to Crescent City? Eight miles follerin' de road. But it am gittin' dark, so you'd bettah be gwine 'long now."

"Jerushy, is it that far? It looks much nearer. Guess I had better wait until morning and ride over. I can't walk that far tonight."

Having twice drained the glass, he sat it down by the spring and found a seat on a log near by."

"Sit down and talk to me, Mammy, while I rest a bit. Yes; it seems pretty close this evening," as he removed his hat and passed his handkerchief over his forehead. "By the way, Mammy Chloe, did you ever run on to the spirit they claim haunts these parts? I'm a trifle shaky when it comes to facing the supernatural, and shouldn't like some spectral form to pounce upon me unawares."

At this speech the black mammy looked up quickly and glanced sharply into the face of her companion. Then, heaving a contented sigh, said:

"D' you s'pose, Marse Justin, dat a niggah would lib all alone down heah in dis ravine wid one of dem things runnin' about loose? Doan yer mine what de folks in de village am sayin', de doctah say dey am all crazy."

"He is right about it, I suppose, Chloe. So you live all alone in the hut? I should think it would be lonely for you."

"Dey am nebber alone who has good, holy thoughts, Marse Justin."

At this remark Justin laughed boisterously. He was greatly amused at the woman's shrewdness.

"The mystery deepens," was his mental comment. "That she is trying to screen the other member of the hut, the beautiful ghost, is very evident. I wonder if the doctor really knows anything about this affair. I must set another trap."

"So you have good company at all times, Chloe? In that you are very fortunate. More fortunate than most people. I must confess to having been bored almost to death this past week with the gang that my uncle is entertaining. He seems to like his visitors, though, and seldom leaves the premises unless it is to take a walk out in the woods here. I suppose you see him sometimes? I believe he mentioned being here the other evening. Are you ailing, Mammy?"

This question and fabrication again caused the colored woman to start and glance sharply at the young man beside her. She seemed to study his face for a time, then answered:

"Yes; de doctah he am a good man. He am very good to a pooh old niggah like Chloe. Yo' see, I am got rheumatiz in dis right knee, and he brings me medicine sometimes."

"I suppose he thinks a deal of you, Chloe? You served his benefactress, and nursed her during her late illness, did you not?"

"Yes, Marse Justin; de pore chile died in Mammy Chloes' ahms."

"She was generous with my uncle to leave him her entire fortune. She must have loved him very much."

"You am right 'bout dat, Marse Justin. He am dat hon'able she wouldn' trus' her chile to no uthah person in de whole worl'."

"Ah! so she left a child. I had not learned of this, Chloe. What has become of it?"

"De po' babe died jes' a few months arter its mammy wuz laid 'way."

"Fortunate for my uncle, wasn't it?" said the young man, starting up. "I must be going. Whenever I happen this way I may stop and look in upon you. You see, I have studied medicine too, and may be able to help you [illegible] rheumatism. Can you read, Chloe?"

"Some; my good mistress lurned me. I like dem papah novels."

"Very well. I shall remember to bring some when I come again. Good-by; if you see the ghost, don't let it escape your clutch, Chloe."

"Now, youse done go 'long, Marse Justin. Ole Chloe tell you dey ain't no ghost heah. Doan you forgit dem books, dey'll be mighty acceptable; I'll be powerful glad t' git 'em."

Upon returning to Eagle Nest, Justin was brought severely to task by his uncle for running away as he did. During his absence a new guest had arrived, and Mrs. Walters, a flirty, fleshy matron, hastened to introduce her daughter. She was a debutante from Boston with an air and an accent that would have done justice to a duchess.

"Since you are the only young people among us, you, no doubt, will depend much on each other for entertainment," remarked the wily matron, as she turned away. "Pray, be watchful of her, Mr. Holbrook, and do not let her get lost in these deep woods about. Really, my heart will be bursting every moment, Mr. Holbrook, unless you help to look after my dear girl."

"It will afford me great pleasure, let me assure you, my dear Mrs. Waters, to lend my assistance in saving your daughter from the fate that you predict?" said Justin, as he bowed low and turned his attention to the young lady at his side, whom he soon discovered was remarkably clever and remarkably false. "With such a mother, how could she be otherwise," was the thought that occupied his mind, as he glanced toward the gracious dame who was trying all her known arts upon the host.

While not a handsome man, and of puny physique, Doctor Ellis was intelligent and interesting, and seemed to possess quite a power over the women with whom he amused himself. The plump matron, who belonged to Boston's smart set, was to all appearances, much smitten, either with the doctor or his possessions, it was hard to tell. The doctor believed it was himself, and since he had been royally entertained in her Eastern home, he wished that she might thoroughly enjoy her visit to Eagle Nest. So when, toward midnight, the guests had retired, and Justin found himself alone in the smoking room with his uncle, the latter said:

"I have reasons, Justin, for wishing you to be particularly agreeable to Isabel Walters. It is also to your interest, for they are people who stand well in the select circle of Boston, and since you are talking of locating there later on, their influence might be worth something to you."

"Well, I seem to be in for it, Uncle, whether I have any inclination or not. The young lady is clever and interesting, I will admit, but false—shockingly so. Now, if there is one thing which I admire more than another, in a woman, it is her genuineness. All these superficial airs and graces are very distasteful to me. However, I shall get on all right with the young lady. Her mother tells me that she is a fine whip and we will have this sport in common."

It thus happened that Justin spent much of his time in the society of the Boston girl, and it happened, too, that his attentions did not pass the notice of the French maid, who spied upon them very often, as the two wandered out alone.

There was much jesting among the under servants at the French maid's expense. They twitted her with having been discarded for the swell Boston girl.

Already smarting with the pain of the young man's indifference and seeming contempt, Annette was not disposed to take the jesting lightly. Outbursts of rage were frequent, and she would have discharged the whole coterie of servants, had she the power to do so.

She was in this mood when one evening she happened to see the object of her devotion start out on foot down the hillside. She was soon following, keeping at a respectable distance, until he neared the ravine. Then, hurrying along, she soon overtook him, and touching his arm, said:

"This is a very fine evening for a lover's stroll; I wonder that you did not bring her along, Mr. Justin."

"To whom do you refer?" he asked, somewhat testily.

"Why, to Isabel Walters, to be sure. You seem greatly devoted."

"Pshaw! What rot, Annette! Stop this silly chatter. I say where are you going, and what are you doing here?"

"Isn't this a free territory? Have I not the right to walk abroad if I wish, Mr. Justin? And am I not a free moral agent responsible to none for my acts? What I may be doing here is strictly my own affair. But concerning the young lady, I repeat—to all appearances, you are very much in love with her."

"Appearances be hanged! And if I were?"

"And if you were? You dare defy me, Justin Holbrook? Have I not warned you? Have I not vowed that you should not marry another?"

"Oh, go to the devil with your nonsense, Annette, and quit bothering me. You talk like one bereft of all reason. Should I want to marry tomorrow, let me assure you, my pretty maid, your threats would have no more effect on me than would the squirrel's chatter in the tree, yonder. What do I care about your foolishness? In the first place, I am not in love with the young lady, and if I were I should hardly answer to one of my uncle's hirelings. Now go! and do not again approach me on this subject; I am sick of your torments!"

"That is unfortunate," laughed the maid, derisively. "Well, I have this to say: Although you are sick to death of my torments, you shall probably have to put up with them. Then, I may find another way to torment you, even less to your liking. I say, cease your attentions to that upstart of an Eastern girl, or you shall bitterly repent. You little know, Justin Holbrook, with whom you were trifling when you made love to Annette Servoss. You shall discover before many moons, sir, that I am not an ordinary woman. I am no weakling whom you can toy with and cast off when you have wearied. I was not put in the world to be a plaything for men of your stamp."

As she ceased to speak, Justin stopped short and looked into the face of the woman. It was not a bad face, but the gleam of anger that now occupied the features made it look almost criminal.

"You are a strange woman, Annette, and a devil! But let me say to you that a standing army of ventursome jades, like yourself, could do me no harm. Why, you—such a one as you, Annette, interfere with my happiness? How silly you talk! I pity you, you poor, misguided creature."

"For these words, I could strike you dead, Justin Holbrook. But there is a worse fate in store if you do not heed my warning. Do not provoke me further by making love to this airy Boston girl. I won't have it! If you persist, you shall be made to feel a woman's vengeance!"

With this the French girl, struggling to control her wrath, turned and left the young man standing in the roadway.

The incident, while it was annoying, soon passed from his mind and without giving her words further thought, Justin continued to entertain his uncle's guest to his best ability.

Several days passed by without his again encountering the troublesome maid, when one evening as he was descending the stairs to the lower hall where the Eastern girl stood awaiting his appearance in her riding habit, he heard some one calling to him from the third floor.

"Come, quick, Mr. Justin, I am in great distress," said Annette, as he retraced his way up the stairs, then on to the third floor of the mansion.

Reaching her side, he found her apparently in great mental agony.

"Ah me! Ah, my soul!" she exclaimed, as she wildly wrung her hands. "What can it mean? What can it mean?"

"Why all this excitement, Annette? It takes you French people to get into a lively dance all about nothing."

"This is no time for idle talk, Mr. Justin. Come with me—come with me—let me show you. Some one is in trouble. There is a great mystery in this house, which I have just learned about. Come, follow me up another flight to the west wing and we shall see what it all means. Be careful, do not talk, lest the servants hear, and tread lightly."

Greatly perplexed, the young man obeyed the maid's commands, and followed her through the long, dark hallways, to the west wing of the mansion up two more flights of stairs to the fifth floor. Then down a few steps and on through another dark passage.

"I did not know there were rooms back here, Annette," her companion whispered, softly. It looks like a prison. What Bluebeard has occupied the mansion hitherto?"

"Sh-h-h! No word, Mr. Justin. Listen! Does your ear catch a sound?"

"No; I do not hear anything; why, what about it?"

"Wait a moment until I push back the slide in this door, then put your ear to the place and listen."

Justin did as he was directed, and heard a mumbling noise, half human, half bestial.

"What does this mean, Annette?" he asked, in horrified tones. "Who or what is inside this room?"

"That is what I do not know, Mr. Justin. I carry the keys to the entire house, but fear to enter here alone. I have never been in this room. The doctor directed that this part of the mansion should never be used. I just happened here by leaving the door to the other passage open, and my bird that was hopping about outside its cage, flew through the passage and lit before this door. It seemed I heard the sound of a human voice, and in picking at the lock, discovered this slide in the door. Then, being afraid to enter, I went to look for some one. You go first, Mr. Justin; see, I am all in a tremble."

"Pshaw! There is nothing to be especially alarmed about, but I must confess to being a trifle curious. Give me the key. Will this one unlock the door?"

After a moment Justin succeeded in turning the key in the rusted lock and throwing open the door, entered a semi-dark and bare room. Seeing no object, but attracted by a feeble light in a room opening just off, he passed on. As he did so, the outer door slammed to, and the treacherous French maid held him her prisoner.

"A trap! a trap!" he muttered. "That she-devil is having her revenge! This is what she meant by her threat!"

Again hearing the same distressing sound that he had heard on the outside, he followed it on through the next room to a short, dark passage, and came to a still better lighted chamber. What a horror met his gaze! He staggered and grew sick! For here was a sight that was destined to fill his soul with revulsion until the last hour of his life!

This strange and thrilling story of treachery and wrong will be continued in next week's Ledger. On pages thirteen and fifteen the reader will find our announcement of patterns and cameras, which are given free to every subscriber who asks for them.

"JUST RUN ACROSS"

Some People Are Lucky.

Some people make an intelligent study of food and get on the right track (pure food), others are lucky enough to stumble upon the right way out of the difficulty just as a Phila. young woman did.

She says: "I had suffered terribly from nervous indigestion, everything seemed to disagree with me and I was on the point of starvation when one day I happened to run across a demonstration of Postum Food Coffee at one of the big stores here.

"I took a sample home and a sample of Grape-Nuts as well and there tried them again and found they agreed with me perfectly. For months I made them my main diet and as the result I am restored to my former perfect health and can eat everything I want to.

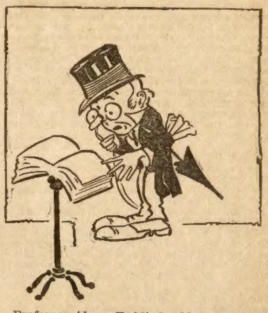
"When I spoke to my physician about Grape-Nuts he said, 'It is a most excellent food.'" Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

There's a reason.

Look for the famous little book, "The Road to Wellville," in every package of both Postum and Grape-Nuts.

◆

Perplexed.



Professor Absen T. Minde—Now, here's a city directory, and if I could only recollect my name I'd soon find out where I live.

◆

Whom to Believe.

In a certain mountain town lived a little boy of four who was very much frightened at the thought of a bear—in fact, it was the only animal or thing he was afraid of—and his mother, in trying to keep him from running into the street and playing in the irrigating ditches, and wandering away to a little unkept park, told him he must not go, for there were bears there. This frightened William and the following day he sat on the doorsteps in a very quiet mood. When asked by the village clergyman, who was passing by, why he did not go out and play, William replied: "I must not go out of the gate for there are bears in the roads and down in the park." The minister laughingly replied: "No; there's no bears anywhere around," but William insisted there were. The minister said: "Let's go in and ask mamma about it," and mamma had to acknowledge she simply told William that to keep him from running away from home. When alone with the little boy the mother said: "William, mamma is sorry she told you a story about the bears, and I guess we had better let me ask God to forgive her." Whereupon William said: "Mamma, you had better let me ask God, for maybe He wouldn't believe you."

◆

Useful Hints for the Home.

To keep milk from turning, put a heavy board weighted down with iron over the milk. If this doesn't keep it from turning tie it up with a rope.

To keep moths out of the carpet, lay heavy Turkish rugs over the carpet. Then the moths will get in the Turkish rugs.

To remove pin heads, get a file and rub it over the head of the pins until worn away.

To make your stockings fast color, dye the lower half of the stockings a bright red, the upper half green, and then paint yellow and blue flowers on them.

To remove the yellow, time-stained appearance of piano keys, try white-washing them.

To keep your silk dress from getting rusty, oil it at regular intervals or keep well greased when hung up.

Coffee stains and other spots are best removed from the table cloth with the scissors. If the spots are large do not attempt to remove them from the table cloth. Remove the table cloth from them.

To remove every vestige of dirt from kid gloves soak the gloves all night in benzine and in the morning light with a match.

◆

A Sandwich at a Banquet.

The young woman who was trying to sing a love ballad at the musical while the guests were chattering like magpies finished the song and sat wearily down.

"Oh, won't you come out and have an ice?" asked the one sympathetic and appreciative man.

"Oh, thank you," said the young woman. "But after such a frost I don't think I care for an ice."

◆

A Lawyer's Poor Outlook.

"Oh, yes, I've opened an office," said the young lawyer. "You may remember that you saw me buying an alarm clock the other day."

"Yes," replied his friend. "You have to get up early these mornings, eh?"

"Oh, no. I use it to wake me up when it's time to go home."

CLEOPATRA'S NECKLACE;

OR,

The Curse of the White Sapphire.

By T. C. HARBAUGH.

Begun in No. 46, Nov. 14. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be procured from news stands, or our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE FINDING OF CYRILLE.

It was now plain to me that my trail must reach across the sea and that in the Old World I would have to pick up the broken threads of my work. I was content to leave Earl Stefface and Ruth Jansen in America, but all the others had crossed the ocean, and if I would solve the double mystery of Marble House I must needs seek them there.

One thing of great importance hastened my departure. Mrs. Harcourt was on the sea, but that was not the real thing which hurried me from the city and landed me on the deck of a swift American liner.

It was a brief cablegram, but it was enough for me.

It reached me not long after my last interview with Ruth Jansen in which I had discovered that she loved Sydney Marlowe, and it ran as follows:

"Come to me at once. CYRILLE.
"54 Rue des Croix, Paris."

Something had happened there. The fair girl, hated by her foster-brother Sydney and under the iron hand of St. John Marlowe, was in peril, or the cablegram would never have sped underneath the waves to me. There was a plaintive cry for help in the few words which burned their way into my brain while I read them. Cyrille felt that in me she had found a friend, and, knowing that I had sworn to solve the double mystery, there seemed no one else to whom she could apply for assistance in the hour of danger.

In London I met with an unavoidable accident which laid me up for several weeks, weeks of agony; but the moment I could get out I hastened to Paris. What might have happened during my detention in the English capital I dared not think. Perhaps the impending blow had fallen upon the head of the sweet girl. Perhaps she was no longer in Paris, for I knew something of the character of St. John Marlowe, the cold-blooded, impassioned man. His manners at times had half impressed me with the idea that he was really mad.

Reaching Paris in the night, I found the Rue des Croix, a street which abutted on the Seine, a winding street which contained some old houses of the times of the Louises, many of which were almost in decay, but all of them still keeping up the magnificence of other days, grand even in their dotage, with immense gardens walled from intruders, like the castles of feudal times.

Number 54 was one of these stately piles. It loomed up before me in its vastness with a few lights in the windows to assure me that it was still inhabited, and with eagerness but many misgivings I mounted the steps and rang.

Footfalls in the corridor beyond the door greeted my ears and presently the portal opened a little. A man with a light in his hand peered at me and drew back as if to close the door. But I pushed in past him. He turned on me with a horrid grimace, thrusting forward the candle almost into my face, but I turned it aside and said as I gripped his tawny wrist:

"Your young mistress—where is she?"

He stammered something I did not catch clearly, but I took it to be a refusal to divulge any secrets of the house.

"She is here," I went on more sternly than ever. "I am her friend and she has sent for me."

The next moment I heard a door open and shut and a man came out into the hallway. At a glance I knew him—St. John Marlowe!

How the millionaire had altered since I had set eyes on him! His face was haggard, his eyes burned like lights in the deep sockets, and he seemed to have increased in stature, but that I knew was occasioned by his leanness.

He peered forward like a hunted man, his gaze searching the ground ahead until at last he seemed to take in the situation.

As I caught sight of him I dropped the wrist of the porter and went forward.

"Good night, Mr. Marlowe, I am an unbidden visitor, as I was once before, but circumstances are such——"

A strange, unearthly cry came from his lips, he fell back against the darkish wall and stared at me.

"What do you want? Of all men, why have you invaded my house?"

I might have told him that I had been summoned across the sea by Cyrille, but it was not my intention to compromise the young woman in any way, so I contented myself in answering him in another way.

"I am still on the trail," I said to him. "You remember the mysteries of Marble House——"

He interrupted me with another cry and gazed at me like a madman.

"Where is Miss Cyrille?"

The name seemed to bring him back to the present, for he attempted to run away, but the next moment my hand was on his arm and I held him fast with the mystified looks of the porter upon me.

Just then there rang throughout the house a scream which nearly set my teeth on edge. It came from somewhere and was so shrill and terrible that I threw up my head and listened.

The porter said something to himself as he turned with the light in his hand, but he could not leave the hall, for St. John Marlowe and I stood in his path.

"Where is Cyrille?" I demanded.

"She is dead, sir."

The words went through me like a knife.

"Was not that her cry?"

"We have servants in the house and one of them is subject to epileptic fits," answered Marlowe.

I did not believe him. To me the man was deliberately lying, lying for a purpose, and I only gripped him the tighter, resolved not to give him his liberty until he told me the truth.

"The girl—your adopted daughter!" I went on. "Dead or alive, where is she?"

"If you must know I will show you."

"That is what I am here for."

St. John Marlowe turned and went through the door he had opened, and I was at his heels. The porter was left in the hall and the last thing I saw when I looked over my shoulder was a ghastly face revealed by the light of the candle.

Marlowe's wrist was cold, as cold as ice. He had turned his head from my gaze and was conducting me up a flight of steps grand in its old-time carvings, and presently we reached a long hall. At a door near the end of the corridor he paused and looked at me.

"Must you really see?" he said in ghostly whispers.

"I must see."

Taking a key from his pocket he opened the door and ushered me into a good-sized chamber, lighted by a number of tapers that burned at the head of a bier.

The shrouded figure that met my searching gaze drove every vestige of courage from my soul.

The face of the sleeper was uncovered, and despite its marbleness I recognized the face of the beautiful Cyrille.

The silence of that chamber, the ghostly tapers of the church, the somber hangings about the couch of death, and the scene as a whole sent through me a nameless shiver. I was scarcely aware that St. John Marlowe stood beside me, his cold eyes riveted upon the occupant of the bier, his lips glued together and bloodless, his long hands shut on his breast.

For some moments I gazed upon this startling scene in silence.

"When did she die?" I suddenly asked, wheeling upon my companion.

He did not seem to notice me.

"Tell me!" I almost roared as I turned fully upon him and laid hands on his shoulders. "There is another mystery here which I shall solve if it costs me my life. There has been foul play here and I——"

St. John Marlowe had turned, for footsteps without the room had fallen upon his ears and before I could resume the broken sentence the door opened and I gave a little cry.

Sydney Marlowe the disowned stood on the threshold and, breaking away from the father, I sprang forward and halted before the son.

"If your parent will not speak you shall!" I cried. "Tell me on whose soul is the blood of the fair girl yonder?"

"On no one's soul," he answered. "She is not dead."

CHAPTER XVIII.

ON THE RACK.

"She is not dead!"

My heart seemed to stand still at these four words from Sydney Marlowe.

Not dead, with the death candles about her bier and the shroud of the departed clinging to her figure? Certainly Sydney Marlowe was as mad as his father.

"It is impossible," I said, still looking into the pale face of the young man. "You see the robings of death, the candles, the pallid face, the——"

"But you cannot see the beatings of the heart," he broke in. "She is in a trance. She has been that way for four and twenty hours. She will come out of it tomorrow, the doctor tells me, but father believes that she will go to the grave then. When did you come, and why?"

I was glad he had asked the question, for it seemed to turn the scale of mentality and bring me back to life. St. John Marlowe moved past us and slipped from the room.

"Let him go," whispered Sydney, as my eyes followed his father. "And let us get out of here."

"But that wild scream I heard a few moments ago?"

He smiled faintly.

"You heard it, did you? Well, you are apt to hear it again if you inhabit this house long. It was one of the encumbrances we got with the mansion."

I looked at him, but did not speak.

A few minutes later I was seated in a chair on the lower floor, and young Marlowe was standing against a table looking down upon me half abstractedly.

"Who sent for you, or did you follow Mrs. Harcourt across the sea?" he suddenly asked.

"She is here, then?"

"Yes, and tomorrow night she gives one of her grand receptions on Rue Lafayette. She is quite the rage in Paris already and her soirees are the talk of the town."

"So soon?"

"Yes. She is 'the American Countess' to the Parisians. But let me ask you again—who sent for you?"

"Miss Cyrille."

"That must have been some time ago."

"Weeks ago. I was detained in London by an accident. What threw Cyrille into that death trance?"

"Ask the madman who owns this house."

"But you hated her, Sydney Marlowe. You even hinted that she had a hand in the double mystery of Marble House."

"I thought so once; but a new light has broken in upon me. She is innocent. Cyrille has suffered much. You must ask my father what threw her into that terrible trance. He alone can divulge that secret."

"Cyrille cabled me that she was in deadly peril."

"She must have done it the last day she was out of the house. She ran away from us, but father found her with the aid of the police and brought her back."

"The old villain! Now"—I looked keenly at young Marlowe as I spoke—"tell me how you came to sell the Cleopatran pearl to Preston & Preston."

Instead of turning pale or starting at my question, Sydney Marlowe exhibited no signs of fright.

"You know of that transaction, then?"

"I have handled the pearl myself."

"I needed money."

"That's a fair excuse. Where did you get the gem?"

"I found it."

"People don't find such gems nowadays," said I.

"But I found that one."

"Probably you had lost it yourself."

"You are shrewd, Mr. Tellfair, for that must needs be a part of your life," he replied, shifting his position a little. "But you are not shrewd enough to guess where I found the pearl I sold to the American jewelers."

"You were at home the night of the seventeenth?"

He did not wince.

"Yes, I was at Marble house that night."

"And in your mother's room."

"You are right."

"And you carried away from that room some valuables?"

He looked at me keenly, and for a moment a faint smile gathered at the corners of his mouth, but it did not remain long.

"I carried from my mother's room some valuable jewels that night. I had a right to them."

"And the pearl you sold was a part of the treasure you took away."

"Who told you this?"

"The person who saw it all."

"Ruth Jansen?"

"No."

"The girl upstairs?"

"No."

"Veron——"

"Veronica Harcourt, who was a visitor to Marble House that night, did not tell me," I broke in, finishing the name that was on his lips.

He looked mystified.

"Mr. Tellfair," said he, leaning suddenly toward me, "you more than excite my curiosity. So some one saw me come out of that little chamber with jewels in my hand! Will you tell me the name of that spy?"

Should I tell him that Earl Stefface was my informant and his accuser? I had not been sworn to secrecy in the matter, and, besides, I was under no obligations to Stefface, for a greater rascal did not exist.

"You shall know who told me," I said after a brief silence. "His name is Earl Stefface."

"That man?" cried young Marlowe, falling back a step. "He saw me, did he?"

"That's what he says."

"What was he doing on that floor that night?"

"He went up to see your mother.'

"Did he tell you that he saw her?"

"He did not proceed further after seeing you."

Sydney Marlowe took a turn about the room and stopped at a mantel, where he helped himself to some wine before he faced me again.

"He has not lied in one particular," said he slowly. "I came out of my mother's room with a necklace. I did not put it into my pocket until I was near the back staircase. Ruth Jansen saw me, too. I went to that room to see my mother. I found her on the floor senseless. The necklace had been overlooked by some one—I did not ask who, but another claimed my attention. I took it, for it rightfully belonged to me. I stole out of the house with it. That's all, Mr. Tellfair."

"But the jewel you sold belonged to the necklace of the white sapphire?"

'It did. I told you awhile ago that I found that pearl where somebody had evidently lost it."

"And that was——"

I paused, for a strange look had suddenly come into young Marlowe's eyes.

"My father does not even recognize me," he suddenly said. "He is not his old self. In other words, St. John Marlowe is as mad as a March hare."

"But the pearl—where did you find it, Sydney Marlowe?"

"I will answer that question after Mrs. Harcourt's soiree. You will go thither with me, of course?"

I bowed and assured him that I would.

CHAPTER XIX.

MRS. HARCOURT'S SOIREE.

As the young scion of the house of Marlowe had predicted, Cyrille came out of the death trance on the following day. The candles and the shroud had been the work of St. John Marlowe, who believed that the girl was dead and the physician and Sydney had kept the secret of the trance between them. The girl, weakened by the experience she had gone through with her foster-father, was far from recovered, and I did not care to intrude upon her until she was able to receive me. However, I permitted Sydney to hint that I was on my way across the ocean, which brightened her up and sent her a few notches on the road to recovery.

As for St. John, I saw that he was really mad. He would stand for an hour looking down upon the thronging street of the French capital, then suddenly he would give vent to a sharp cry and vanish.

The story drawn from the son concerning his visit to Marble House the night of the tragedy had weighed with me strangely. The fact that he had carried jewels from his mother's room was against him, but his denial of the theft of the white sapphire caused some doubts to linger in my mind.

Mrs. Harcourt, who had reached Paris a fortnight ahead of me, had taken the city by storm. Immensely rich and proud, she was not long in letting the Parisians know that an American had come among them who knew how to spend money and entertain lavishly. Her millions stood her in good play in Paris. She flashed out in society like a jewel, putting all Paris on the qui vive, and the papers rang with accounts of her functions and splendid turnouts.

She had not run across the Marlowes. The Rue Lafayette, one of the most fashionable streets in the city, was all agog with her doings. Some said she had come to capture one of the Orleans princes, others that she was determined to wed the Count de Montmorenci; but she went her own way, dazzling the whole town and creating endless talk.

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THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

When Writing Mention The Chicago Ledger. When Writing Mention The Chicago Ledger.

Her house was always open to all. Her soirees were in a manner exclusive, but as no one went but the haut ton, she had no occasion to order the rabble from her carved doors.

It was 10 o'clock the night after my arrival in Paris that Sydney Marlowe and I dressed for Mrs. Harcourt's dazzling soiree. I had made up in a manner which led me to believe that she would not recognize me as Tracy Tellfair, the American detective, and, confident in my disguise, I alighted in front of her palace and walked up the broad carpeted steps.

We were ushered into a blaze of light. The immense house was like Aladdin's palace in its sumptuous adornments from foundation to the loftiest windows. A subtle perfume pervaded the atmosphere, and unseen bands of minstrels on every floor captivated the ear. Back of the house were the gardens built in terraces after the style of Louis XIV., and the fragrance of the roses could be inhaled everywhere.

More than one thousand guests filled the vast chambers of the palace or loitered in the gardens which abutted on the Seine, and boats containing merry parties shot out through the water gates and flitted among the electric lights that danced like fireflies on the surface of the water. It was like fairyland.

For some time after entering the palace I did not catch a glimpse of the hostess.

Just as I was entering one of the rooms I noted a flutter of excitement at the foot of one of the stairs, and looking up I beheld Mrs. Harcourt half-way down. She looked like a queen in her sparkling attire. Her figure, large and bold, but well rounded, showed off to advantage, and her jewels dazzled the eyes of the lookers-on.

I drew back a pace as she reached the bottom of the stairs, not wishing to come in direct contact with her too soon, but she caught my eye as she put a slippered foot upon the carpet. It was the time of trial, and I was glad when it was over, for she received my obeisance with a wave of her hand and a stately bow and passed on. I had not been recognized.

A moment later Sydney Marlowe came round to me and laid his hand on my arm.

"You saw our American Countess, eh?" he smiled.

"Yes. She is superb, but she is the same Veronica Harcourt."

"She could never be anything else."

Then—I cannot explain why—the words of Ruth Jansen came to me: "I cannot keep Veronica Harcourt's secrets much longer."

"She has a number of titled guests," said I.

"Blood suckers and money leeches, all," replied Marlowe, sarcastically. "So long as she feeds them and gives them entertainment, so long they will grovel at her feet. They are all alike the world over. Their society is a sham and rotten to the core."

I was impatient for the soiree to come to an end. I wanted to hear the ending of Sydney Marlowe's story about the pearl. He had promised to tell me how it came into his possession, but not until after the party.

As it would not do for us to be together all the time we separated at last and I strolled through the palace and into the gardens.

The night was superb. A perfumed breeze nodded the flowers on their stems and everywhere from secluded nooks came half-suppressed laughter as some of the guests had withdrawn to enjoy private tete-a-tetes in the terraced garden.

At last I found myself seated on a settee not far from the wall that ran along the river. Back of me swept the Seine, which hides the darkest secrets of wicked Paris, but tonight it was the scene of merry-making.

The spot I had selected for repose and a quiet cigar could not have been more to my liking. Not far away a path slipped among the bushes and overhead spread the ancient trees, rendering the place quite dark but cozy.

Suddenly I heard a voice that startled me. It was not far away, and as I bent forward, for I could get a glimpse of the winding path by doing so, I caught sight of a garment that held me in rapt attention.

Professionally I have played eavesdropper, but on this occasion I did not think of enacting that role until the voice was heard again.

I knew that Veronica Harcourt had stolen from the house with some one, and that she was within a few feet of me at that very moment.

I held my breath as I leaned forward and listened.

"You know, Count, that I love Paris," said the rich woman. "I have crossed the ocean for pleasure, for pleasure, after all, is the essence of life."

'It is the foundation stone of our existence," was the reply in rich tones. "You will remain with us a long time, we trust."

"We?"

"I, then. Is that not better?"

"Far better, my dear Count.'

"I will do all in my power to make your life in Paris a happy one. Ah, that is a superb necklace, mon ami."

A pause followed, and I heard the voice of Veronica Harcourt again.

"It is the only one of the kind in the world. I never wear it among my guests, but I slipped it on to come out here and enjoy the beauties of the night."

"And why do you not dazzle your friends with its luster?"

"It is too precious to wear even in my own house," was the reply. "This great stone is a white sapphire and the pearls once blazed on the neck of a queen."

"You interest me."

"On the neck of your unfortunate queen, Marie Antoinette," pursued Mrs. Harcourt.

I was on my feet in an instant. Breathless, I parted the bushes and looked through the opening thus made. The pair occupied a settee scarcely ten feet from me, and the gleams of one of the garden lights fell upon the millionairess.

I looked but once, and what I saw, what fascinated me, was the necklace whose pendant lay upon Veronica Harcourt's heaving bosom. It was the white sapphire of Cleopatra's necklace!

CHAPTER XX.

THE LAST OF THE WHITE SAPPHIRE.

There could be no mistake.

It was the counterpart of the duplicate which I had seen in America; but the real gems shone with a luster no imitation could produce, and as they lay on the white skin of Veronica Harcourt I thought of the curse that had followed them for thousands of years.

Suddenly a strain of music swelled over all and the pair on the settee rose.

"I must slip up to my room and remove the necklace," exclaimed Mrs. Harcourt. "As I have told you, Count, my guests never see this priceless bauble."

They were gone even as I looked, vanishing down the shrubberied path, and I stood alone with my heart almost in my throat and warm blood tingling my finger ends.

Ten minutes later I re-entered the lighted palace and looked for Marlowe, but he was not in sight. The lower chambers swarmed with revelers, for the wine had been flowing for some time and there were flushed faces and lustrous eyes.

Watching my opportunity, I bounded up the red staircase and halted in the wide corridor above.

As I stopped a tall maid turned into the hall and stopped at sight of me. In another instant I was at her side and my hand encircled her wrist.

She stared blankly at me, without a semblance of color in her face, and as I drew her forward I said:

"Show me Mrs. Harcourt's room."

"You are a robber!" cried the girl.

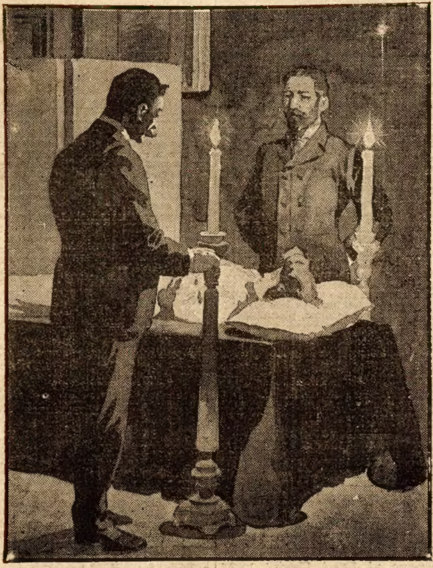
"Show me the room."

She turned, and I held her wrist till she opened a door and we crossed the threshold.

"You are her maid, are you not?" I asked.

"I am Yevto, her hairdresser."

"Then you know where Mrs. Harcourt keeps her jewels."



"She is not dead."

The terrified girl tried to twist from my grasp, but she was detained.

Pointing to a dresser which I found locked she was pulled up to it and held there with one hand, while with the other I tried my keys till it opened. In the first drawer lay a blue velvet box which I opened to see before me Cleopatra's necklace!

"You won't take that, will you?" said the girl.

"I will take it down to Mrs. Harcourt."

"But she doesn't want it now. She never wears it in company."

"Never mind, my girl. She will wear it for me, I'm sure."

I placed the jewels in my pocket and led Yevto from the room.

"A close mouth is your future happiness," said I, admonishingly. "Mrs. Harcourt wants to see her jewels."

With this I dismissed the girl.

On the lower floor I almost ran across Sydney Marlowe.

He pulled me aside eagerly.

"Stefface is here—in the house. He just came," he hurriedly whispered.

"Earl Stefface?"

"Yes, the man to whom father has sold Cyrille."

"Where is he?"

"He and Mrs. Harcourt have just gone into the garden."

I broke from Marlowe and turned away.

"What ails you, Tellfair?" cried the young man, seizing my sleeve. "You've discovered something!"

I pulled Marlowe into a little niche and drew my hand from my pocket.

"Look!" said I.

"My God! The white sapphire!'

"Yes. Wait for me. In the garden, are they?"

Marlowe nodded.

It did not take me long to reach the gardens of the widow's palace. Thinking that I would be likely to find the pair where I had seen Mrs. Harcourt and Count Montmorenci, I hastened thither.

Twenty steps away I heard voices.

"I must have it," said a man as yet unseen, but whose voice was not strange to me. "I am simply desperate. In the name of heaven, how am I to pay for my wedding outfit without money?"

"Get it of St. John Marlowe."

"Of that madman? Why, I have just come from his house. He is as mad as a March hare. I must have ten thousand dollars, not francs, mind you."

"It is too much. Many a lover has gone to the altar on less than that."

"But I cannot," grated Earl Stefface. "You know what I can do. You remember the night you came to Marble House and how you left it. You recall that night——"

"Hush! This garden may have listeners."

"You remember that when you went away from Marble House that night you——"

"Fiend!" broke in Veronica Harcourt.

"Yes, you can call me all the pet names you please. But I've got the evidence, while you——"

"And what if I should unseal my lips?"

"They'd simply laugh at you."

It was cruel, heartless, on Stefface's part, but he seemed to take delight in the torture he was inflicting.

"I can bring the son here within five minutes."

"The son, you say?"

"Yes, Sydney Marlowe."

"Bring him, then. I will be here."

Earl Stefface flitted past me, and the woman was alone. In another moment I stood before her as if I had risen from the ground.

"Mrs. Harcourt,' said I, "I am Tracy Tellfair. You may remember having met me in America."

She leaned forward and searched my face for a moment.

"I remember you. You are the man who told me about my sister."

"Mag Geffron. Your friend Stefface will not return for a little while. I would like to ask you if you recognize this," and I drew from my pocket the famous necklace and held it out to her.

A half-smothered exclamation broke over her lips, she started back, but suddenly thrust her massive figure forward.

"Where did you get it?" she exclaimed.

"In your boudoir a few moments ago."

Suddenly the hand of Veronica Harcourt swooped down upon the necklace like an eagle. She caught it up and drew back, her figure rising to supreme height.

"You never lose a trail, do you, man?" she almost shrieked. "I am the woman! I entered Marble House that night for the fatal jewels and came away with them. Somewhere in the house I lost one from the string, and some person must have found it. I coveted the accursed sapphire from the first time I saw it, and when Mary Marlowe surrendered it to me she was senseless and, so far as I know, she never gave me away. Never, do I say? I have paid Nurse Jansen to keep a secret of some kind. What are you going to do?"

"There is but one thing for me to do," said I, "and that is to see justice meted out to the guilty."

She looked at me a moment as though she intended to launch herself tigress-like upon me, but suddenly she broke away, tearing down the path. The necklace dangled from her hand and I followed. She seemed as fleet as a deer and I saw her spring up a flight of steps that led to the lichened wall overlooking the river.

She turned upon me a moment in the vivid light. I was at the bottom of the steps.

"This is the end of the white sapphire! Its curse is ended!" she cried.

I stood spellbound beneath her, her giant figure rising between me and the lighted sky, and while I looked I saw Veronica Harcourt bound into the air, and before I could reach the top of the wall the waters of the Seine had covered her and Cleopatra's necklace!

As I turned to go back I almost ran into the arms of Earl Stefface and Sydney Marlowe.

"Where is Mrs. Harcourt?' they both asked in the same breath.

"In the Seine with the white sapphire."

"Where she should be," commented Marlowe. "I can tell you now, Tellfair. The pearl I sold to Preston & Preston I found in the upper hall of Marble House the night of the crimes."

"Mrs. Harcourt confessed that she lost one of the set there that night."

"Then you believe my story now?"

"I do. The murderess lies in the river!"

A few days later St. John Marlowe died in the madhouse which had put Cyrille in fear of her life, and Sydney, who no longer hated her, became a changed man. Earl Stefface, finding now that Marlowe senior was gone he could not enforce the compact between them, suddenly left Paris, and a few months later I bade adieu to detective life, for the hunt of the white sapphire had given me a love which would never grow old.

Sydney Marlowe rejected the wild love of Ruth Jansen and married another, and the curse of the white sapphire no longer exists. For somewhere beneath the rushing waters of the Seine lie the fatal pearls which brought doom to every possessor.

The End.

Singular People.

Among the Arabs an interesting department of woman's duty is dairy work. This, like all other operations, is carried out on an old-fashioned and patriarchal plan. To make butter, for instance, a small sheepskin is filled with milk and tied to a ring in the wall. The woman then sits flat on the floor and rocks it to and fro till little balls of butter begin to form within. These grow larger and larger and accumulate and are finally brought out as one big lump. The remaining milk is then boiled on the fire with bits of meat. The male members of the family now come together, a large dish of cooked rice is placed before them and the boiled milk poured over it. Then, making balls of the mixture with his hands, each member quickly swallows his share and rises to wash his hands. This done, the girls and mother sit down and eat what the men are pleased to leave.

In oriental countries the recklessness of drivers of vehicles and their disregard for foot passengers is very marked; but in Cairo they have a series of curious cries with which they warn a footman. They specify the particular part of his anatomy which is in danger, as thus: "Look out for thy left shin, oh, Uncle." "Boy, have a care for the little toe on thy right foot." Oh, blind beggar, look out for thy staff." And the blind beggar, feeling his way with the staff in his right hand, at once obediently turns to the left. "Oh, Frankish woman, look out for thy left foot." "Oh, burden-bearer, thy load is in danger." "Oh, water-carrier, look out for the tail-end of thy pigskin water bottle."

An interesting scheme has been launched with the view of alleviating the misery caused by the failure of the sardine fisheries off the coast of Brittany. It consists in the emigration of the Breton fishermen to the shores of Algiers and Tunis, where the fish is so abundant that one Sicilian fleet of 2,500 boats employs over 12,000 men. Already several hundred Breton families have handed in their names at various towns and villages; but danger of the scheme failing lies in the absorbing love of country, for nearly all the fishermen make the condition that they shall be brought back to spend the close season in their native haunts.

Brief Bits.

Prince Julius of Schleswig-Holstein, brother of King Christian of Denmark, died recently at the age of 78. He was a general in the Danish army and saw service in the Danish wars of 1840 and 1863. It is not often that a man of 85 when he loses a brother of 78 has yet another left who is 77; but the King of Denmark is an exception in many respects. When he became King he already had a son on a throne, King George of Greece, and had at least one elder brother. Last year he lost a sister, who was in her 91st year.

—

The peach is an Asiatic product; the Yangtsekiang country being the home of this fruit. The Chinese have always been familiar with the peach from earliest records. In the celestial kingdom the peach blossom is used in ceremonials, something after the manner of the orange blossoms in this country. The United States Department of Agriculture has had an agent in that section of China studying the early history and evolution of this fruit.

Nothing to Marvel At.

He was deep in his paper and didn't want to be interrupted, but, of course, she didn't care anything about that.

"Did you read about the young couple that went through the marriage ceremony for a joke?" she asked.

"No," he replied. "What of it?"

"Why, after it was all over they discovered that it wasn't a joke at all."

"Oh, every one who tackles the marriage question finds that out."

He wasn't interrupted again for a full hour.

It's a fortunate thing for some men that their ancestors left them an honored name.

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Colombia is having a chance to repent at leisure.

Panama can hardly wait for the digging to begin.

Colombia needs to have some brainy friend tell it what to do.

Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between contentment and laziness.

Few men are appreciated until they take up their residence in a cemetery.

Some men trust to luck in this world and some others are lucky to get trusted.

Some women adapt themselves to circumstances and others apply for a divorce.

An Irishman says that big hearts and big pocketbooks seldom travel hand in hand.

Of course, those Frenchmen who ride in airships look down on people in automobiles.

It's useless for some women to deny that they married for money after you see their husbands.

It isn't the shortcomings of a young man that the girl's father objects to; it's his long stayings.

Getting into debt is like dropping from a balloon. Getting out again is like climbing a greased pole.

Three robbers picked up near St. Louis admitted that they were from Chicago. However, nobody here had missed them.

There is a man in Cape Cod 35 years old who has never been kissed. In Missouri they probably wonder why the man bothers about living.

Mrs. Dowie declares that Elijah II. will yet capture Paris. Perhaps she thinks the chariot of fire will be able to vanquish the airship in the first round.

It will be interesting to the workers to read that after what Mr. Schwab has done to the steel trust it will be necessary to reduce wages in order to catch up.

Even if the shingle trust is perfected it will not help the small boy, for if shingles get too expensive his mother will be able to do a pretty good job with her slipper.

Scarett, who was elected president of the Automobile Club of America, has an appropriate name for the position. Perhaps the members could find no man named Runoveritt.

THE MARK OF CAIN;

or, The Black Pride of the Countess of Barnchester.

BY CONSTANCE BEATRICE WILLARD.

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CHAPTER VII.—Continued.

"I am the most clumsy fellow in the world. No, no; a thousand times, no. It is just this, Queenie, dear, all the love except the tender, gentle kind I have always had for you, has been burned out of me. You would not care for a mere animalism which comes only of the senses? It would be an insult to offer you such a feeling. Just wait, dearie, and when you are my wife I think I can return your affection more fully. You are almost constantly in my thoughts, and I am so worried about your health. Say, sweetheart, are you not mistaken about your being so ill?"

A sad expression came over her face as she shook her head. Unfastening the soft, white gown trimmed with ermine, she stepped from it, dressed in the conventional evening dress he was accustomed to, but how tiny she was. The neck and arms which had been so soft and round, were now shrunken and almost transparent. Every bone in the little neck stood out distinctly. She shivered and enfolded herself in the disguising robe.

King stood staring like one bereft of his senses, then bending down, he drew her into his arms, and forgetting his strange repulsion, his quivering heart, everything in the great wave of compassion which came over him, he rained kisses upon her face, her glowing hair, and the crimson lips, while she, nestling in his arms, felt some of her old strength come back to her.

"You shall not go from me," the young man cried, as soon as his trembling voice would allow him, "you shall not. I have been brutal. Never fear, my dear, I will win you back to health and strength. Think, dear, a little two weeks are to pass, and then we will go to the soft, balmy Italy. We will visit all the places where love is to be found and nourished, and I will bring you back so fat and hearty you will laugh at the nonsense you have talked tonight."

She said nothing, but nestled her face up against his, and he continued, planning the trip, and her heart gladdened with his words, when suddenly a cold hand clutched her throat, for through some far away distance she heard him say:

"Ah, yes, my darling, we will be so happy, you and I, Clover, sweetest," and with a choking cry she fell from his arms upon the floor, as white as the ermine on her robe, while he bent over her, muttering between his teeth:

"Am I such a brute that I cannot refrain from stabbing this poor child with every word? Why will my treacherous thoughts play me such a trick? Poor little Queenie, poor little thing!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

"The love of a strong man for a good woman, is the fairest thing on God's green earth."

In the name of Sweet Charity many crimes are committed, but the ladies interested in the concert given for the benefit of the Ragged Errand Boys, however, would have insisted that nothing but good could come of such a cause, especially as the names of many of the great social leaders appeared as Lady Benefactresses. One of them called upon Clover, and finally induced her to promise a song. When she had left, the girl would have given much to have recalled her promise, and Tom had great difficulty in inducing her to live up to it. This promise of hers worked in with his plans, for the noble, keen-sighted young man was bending every energy to clear up what he was sure were mysteries, and to chase the cloud from the face of the woman he still loved so dearly, although he knew that on the night when he had put away the temptation of marrying her, he had lost her forever. Not because she felt any pique, but simply because then he had learned how futile it would be to try and replace the image enshrined in her heart. Many men would have plunged into dissipation; others would have taken the shadow without the substance of love, but Thomas Litchfield was a man molded in a different form, and instead of repining, he kept his mind busy trying to entangle the threads chance had placed in his firm, strong hands.

Others beside Tom and Clover were interested in this concert, which had finally resolved itself into a great social event. Mrs. Fast had offered her spacious rooms, two drawing rooms, opening into a large hall, lined with costly pictures, with a library and several smaller rooms on the other side, and there it was decided to give the entertainment. The hall was sufficiently large to accommodate a thousand people, and at one end she had a beautiful stage erected, with scenery painted by a master. The curtain was of panne red velvet, while the seats, which made to order, were of richly carved mahogany. These seats were numbered in gold, and the programs were hand-painted. The general effect of the magnificent hall was red, and she had the same color scheme carried out in the floral decorations, there being over ten thousand American Beauty roses, to say nothing of myriads of carnations, red passion flowers, orchids, each one of which was worth its weight in gold. Great spikes of crimson hyacinths peeped out of delicate greenery and the palms reached the high, fretted ceiling. This ceiling was rounded into a dome, and from the very center was draped a huge American flag, made of silk and studded with diamonds, each star being a glittering mass, which reflected the thousand lights. This flag was repeated, in a smaller edition over the stage, and the footlights shone through a mass of smilax and red roses.

In a quaint balcony, brought at a fabulous price from the mouldering walls of a Flemish cathedral, was stationed the orchestra, the finest to be obtained in the city, whose instruments glittered with jewels, and uniforms, all presented by the hostess, were wrought of rare materials and loaded down with gold embroidery and lace.

In no way had expense been spared. The list of singers included some whose price for the one song rendered was enough to support many of the little ones for whom the concert was given. In fact, Clover was the only one who was not paid, and about her there was an agreeable mystery. The great lady who had asked her while collecting donations for the concert, had heard of her marvelous voice from her master, and would not betray the girl's secret, for it was her wish that no one should know who she was. The sixth number was simply marked: "Vocal Solo—Selected."

The concert was to open with an overture at nine-thirty, and as it was announced that no late comers would be admitted, the guests began to arrive as early as nine. Mrs. Fast stood a little back from the grand entrance, where one of Wall Street's magnates was taking tickets and Percy Stanley was handing out the costly program, and smiled at each before a boy, dressed in the fashion of Louis XIV., came forward to guide him to his seat. Each guest received a gift, worth many times over the ten dollars asked for the ticket, and many of them were very expensive.

Mrs. Fast had learned a good many things since she stood upon the steamboat and admired Thomas Litchfield. She was a beautiful woman, with bronze-colored hair, faultless complexion, reddish brown eyes, and eyebrows and lashes as black as ink, which if not natural looked sufficiently artificial to be to the woman born. Still she was really more than a beautiful woman, she was an artist. With her well-developed loveliness, set in the midst of rich color and pagan display of jewels, she wore a simple black gauze, cut very low, from which her milk-white arms and neck rose like marble. There she stood, triumphant in her glorious beauty, unadorned save for her hair, and the artistic perfectness of her arms and shoulders. On the plump hands, usually glittering with rings, she wore but two, her wedding ring and its keeper, an immense diamond.

It seemed as though all of New York was coming; that is all of New York that amounted to anything. Rich ladies, charming, suave and bewildering, with attendant cavaliers who hung upon their smiles and carried their pugs, so that even the dear little dogs were allowed to bear a paw in the good work, for each dog was charged full fare.

About twenty minutes past nine King entered with Queenie on his arm. The next day they were to be married, and their passage was engaged on one of the Cunarders. She had expressed a wish to attend, and King, very gentle and tender now, brought her, for he could refuse her nothing. Since the night when he had caused her such misery by uttering Clover's name, neither had said anything about the past, both seemed to be straining forward into the future.

Very frail and dainty she looked as she walked down the broad aisle to the seats assigned to them on the second row, for King had bought his seats rather late. She wore an ivory white satin, profusely trimmed with lace. Great clouds of it enveloped the little figure, hiding the fragility, and giving an added daintiness to the golden head and flower-like face. A string of priceless rubies encircled the little neck, while a pendant of rubies and diamonds hid the great hollow at the base of the throat. She carried a cluster of peculiar red orchids, which matched her rubies, to which King had taken a fearsome dislike. They reminded him of that curious Indian flower.

Several seats back King noticed the Countess, sitting like a queen upon her throne in black velvet and point lace, with the famous Barnchester diamonds in her hair and upon her bosom, while the Earl sat beside her, a perfct specimen of intelligent young manhood.

Crowded as the hall became, and in spite of the costly flowers, whose perfume was very heavy, the air was cool and pleasing, for hidden shafts brought chilled breezes from the ice condenser in the basement, while huge Indian Punkas were pulled by boys dressed in costly raiment brought from the Orient. Certainly New York never saw before so much lavish display, so artistically planned.

At the appointed hour the program began, and to their credit be it said that every guest was in place. Needless to say the program was enthusiastically received, and in the intervals the little Louis XV. pages served ices, champagne cup, and other cooling drinks. In one of the early intervals, Litchfield passed down the aisle until he reached King, whom he touched on the shoulder. King turned and gave an exclamation of delight.

"Thought I would not see you again before I'm off, but then you will be here when I return."

Tom did not reply to his implied question, but said in a low voice:

"I want to call your attention to No. 6. My sister sings that."

"You don't say. Oh, Litchfield, I want you to meet my betrothed. Queenie, dear, let me present my friend whom I have often mentioned, Mr. Litchfield; Litchfield, Miss Queenie Phillips," the young man bowed very low, with the simple dignity which sat upon him so well, and Queenie murmured a few words, but a chill seemed to blow over her, and she shivered as he, excusing himself, left them, and went to where the Countess and the Earl were sitting.

King noticed the shiver, and was proportionately worried.

"Darling, are you cold?" he whispered, tenderly, drawing her soft, white corded silk cloak, lined with ermine, about her. Queenie smiled, such a quaint, pleading little smile, and shook her head.

"That man was walking over my grave," she said, quietly, and King felt his blood fairly freeze in his veins, for he remembered Clover had said the same thing, and what had followed.

At the same time Tom was whispering to the Countess:

"I must leave you two, but I want you to look closely at the one who sings No. 6. Do not leave before I see you again. If you can, get a glimpse of the girl sitting down there, the little thing with a white cloak about her. The one with King, Geoffrey, the one he was telling us about," and with a kindly pressure on the young man's arm, Litchfield vanished, and both the Earl and Countess strained their eyes to obtain a glance at the crime clothed, golden-haired girl. Suddenly the orchestra began to play a plaintive little melody, one which brought the tears into the eyes of that vast audience, and caused the chattering whispers to cease instantly. The music swelled in volume, and the curtains parting, discovered a girl standing knee-deep in a very excellent imitation of a clover field. The dainty costume was the same, rare color, fashioned from costly silks, and upon the creamy bosom and arms gleamed diamonds worth a large fortune. Above them, though, were the wonderful dark eyes, which once a man look into, he lost his heart, never to receive it back again.

As quietly as though in her own drawing room, Clover stood before the large audience composed of the best people in New York society, her little hands hanging loosely clasped before her, and as soon as the murmur died away she began in a voice so well trained, so powerful and yet as clear as a bell:

"Oh, there's nothing in life so alluringly fair
As a field of red clover, perfuming the air;
Its fragrance pursues me beneath other skies;
Its memory brings homesickness tears to my eyes;
No wine can intoxicate, all the world over,
Like the sweet wandering wind blowing over the clover.

Oh, I dream of that carpet of crimson red clover,
Where the birds and the bees frolic riotously over;
Of the swaying and bending when wild storms awaken;
Of the wet, heavy blossoms all crushed and forsaken;
Of the wild, spicy fragrance the sun then shines over,
Of the sensuous wooing of wind in the clover.

Oh, weary of fashion, of baubles and show,
Death-tired of the loves which no constancy know;
Sick to my heart of friendship's false vows
Nerveless and broken I sink; ah, then I arouse
To a sweet, subtle incense, away far seas over,
It calls where the wind blows over the clover."

When the beautiful voice sounded the first note, King started almost out of his seat, while Queenie's white face became ghastly. As he listened to the voice, so melting, entreating, singing the simple song he knew she had written herself, a great load was lifted from his heart forever. Whatever else might have happened, Clover was just as sweet and good a woman as he had felt her to be in those days in paradise. What a horrible dream it had all been. Where was she staying? How had he missed her name on the program? Then he saw a great six, in incandescent lights, standing out at the side, and realized that he was listening to the mysterious number. As the song neared the end, he felt his whole being rise toward her, and as the words came to him:

"Death-tired of the loves which no constancy know;
It calls where the wind blows over the clover."

And rising he started toward the graceful figure.

As she ended her song, Clover's beautiful eyes fell and met a pair of agonized ones, those her soul had been longing for these many months; she gave a little cry, then staggered, and as the curtain dropped together, was seen to fall into the arms of a gentleman in evening dress, whom King recognized as Litchfield.

Deathly white, his chest heaving, he sank back in his seat, with his thoughts in wild confusion, but was recalled by Queenie's voice:

"Who was that, King?"

He turned and looked at her, and suddenly the awful thing he had done rushed over him.

CHAPTER XIX.

"Love cannot be forced or bought, it is a
free and gladsome gift, the greatest
and the best."

Until the day of his death King Wadsworth will never forget the agony of spirit he endured as he sat there, Clover's music ringing in his ears, and Queenie's shoulder against his own. It seemed something horrible, unreal, and he longed to awaken and find it all a dream. Before he had seen Clover standing there he had been unhappy enough, but that was nothing to the misery he now endured, for the sight of her had awakened all his love, and he knew that he was wronging both himself and the poor little woman by his side in marrying where he could not give his heart.

Queenie sat motionless, her lips gleaming like threads of fire, her little hands clenched and her eyes looking away into the future. At last King touched her on the arm.

"Queenie," he whispered, softly.

She turned her eyes upon him, and he was horrified to read what he did in their depths. Such agony of soul, so desperate an expression as Dore might have depicted in the eyes of the damned.

"Queenie! Queenie! what are we to do?" he said, in the same low tone.

An artist was singing the flute song, her notes falling like pearls, and yet on their ears the wondrous melody made no impression, nor on those of the Countess of Barnchester, who saw plainly the profile of the girl's face, when Queenie turned. To the surprise of her son, she gasped and turned so white that he thought she was going to faint. Rallying herself, however, she clutched his arm, and said, hoarsely:

"Who is that girl? The one down there, looking so strangely at the young man, and who is he?"

The Earl was astonished, but he replied, in a very low tone so as to disturb no one:

"The young lady, Miss Queenie Phillips, and the man, King Wadsworth," then caught his mother in his arms, for she had fainted dead away.

With the help of a gentleman sitting by the Countess, the Earl succeeded in bearing his mother into one of the smaller rooms, which had been fitted up as a retiring room, and laid her upon a couch, while a physician was summoned, but before he arrived she had recovered, and was sitting up.

After she was comfortably placed, she beckoned her son and said, in a low tone:

"Go find your—I mean Mr. Litchfield. Tell him to come to me at once," but almost before her words were out of her mouth, the gentleman in question entered the room.

"Tom!" the lady cried, half rising.

The Earl looked such a picture of astonishment and anger that Tom's eyes sparkled, for in the midst of all his bitterness, he could always extract a full measure of fun, as he was one who had the saving sense of humor to an intense degree.

Taking one of the shapely hands of the Countess, he pressed it gently, and said, in a low tone:

"Control yourself," then turning to the young man, he asked:

"Will you take your mother to my apartments? My sister will be there and welcome her. She expects you."

"And you?" asked the Countess, clinging to the firm, strong hand.

"I will follow right after you. My boy, do as I say and trust your mother and me. Several mysteries are going to be cleared up tonight," and, without waiting for anything further, he hastened away and down the aisle to where King and Queenie sat.

King turned nervously when he felt Litchfield's hand upon his arm, and for a moment looked wildly into the stern eyes, then was satisfied. The honor and happiness of Clover were safe in the hands of such a man.

"You will forgive me," Litchfield said, softly, when I tell you that I want you and Miss Phillips on a matter of life and death. Will you come with me?"

Queenie turned her head, and the man's keen eyes rested upon the fragile little thing with real pity, but he did not relax his purpose.

"Come, King," she said, finally, unable to say otherwise with those compelling eyes upon her, and King tenderly wrapping the cloak about her, led her out of the hall.

"Where do you want us to go, Litchfield?" he asked, sternly. "Miss Phillips' health is very delicate, and I do not want to expose her under any conditions."

"Believe me, Wadsworth, if it were not a matter of great moment I would not ask you to come with me. However, Miss Phillips' health will not suffer, a carriage is here; just carry her to it, and in a few minutes we will be at our destination."

"Which is?" King asked, haughtily, for his pride was in arms, although something compelled him to obey this capable man, whom he knew to be the soul of honor.

"Right here," Tom answered, as the carriage, which had been moving rapidly, stopped, and the door was opened by the driver, who looked eagerly, and had any one been noticing him, longingly at the heavily muffled little figure King lifted out so tenderly and bore into the corridor of a large hotel.

"Patience; in a moment you will see my purpose," Tom said, placing them in an elevator, and giving his floor. The cage ascended to the fifth, when Tom motioned his companions out, and going to one of the doors, opened it with his key, then standing back, said, quietly:

"Please go in."

With Queenie on his arm, muffled in her heavy cloak until nothing was visible but her golden head, King passed into a dimly lighted room, but saw beyond under the full glare of the electric light a vision which caused him to stagger and almost lose his reason.

CHAPTER XX.

"Alas! the love of woman! it is known
To be a lovely and a fearful thing."

Yet it was not anything so very disconcerting, simply a young girl sitting by a table reading; but that girl was Clover.

In a moment the door was shut, the vision disapeared, and the room in which they were standing flooded with light.

Tom's low voice broke the oppressive silence:

"Pardon me, my sister neglected to close the door into her private apartments. Kindly step this way," and he threw open the door on another side of the room, and King entered a beautiful drawing room, where they found the Countess, still pale, and her son.

King felt the little arm within his own quiver, and saw the Countess rise hastily, and then fall back in her chair, when Tom again spoke:

"Countess, pray forgive me, but I desire to present my very dear friend, Mr. King Wadsworth, and his adopted sister, Miss Queenie Phillips, and also, Miss Phillips, may I present the Earl of Barnchester?" and he waved his hand toward the young Earl, who stood, looking from one to the other, filled with amazement.

"Now, Countess," Tom continued, "I leave you to make any further introductions."

King felt an arm withdrawn, as in a dream saw Queenie throw back the heavy cloak, and emerge, delicate, fragile like one of the snowflakes faling outside, but endowed with a dignity and nobility of bearing that was astonishing. Stepping forward and leaving her costly wrap disregarded on the floor behind her, she said haughtily:

"Pardon me, I will make the further introductions. King, permit me to introduce my mother and brother."

The young Earl sprang forward with a glad cry, but a transparent hand warded him off.

"When a man is drowning they say certain pictures come before his eyes with terrible vividness. I do not need to be drowned to bring up a certain picture, for it has never left me."

Tiny as she was, the girl seemed to fill the room, her great blue eyes filled with a light not of this world, the string of living fire about her throat, which was reproduced on her lips, for these were like a wound across the spotless pallor of her face.

"The picture which has been with me since I was a helpless little girl, is this."

The blue eyes centered upon the Countess, who shrunk back in her chair, her own eyes staring wildly.

"A great hall lined with pictures,—pictures, my lord brother, of the ancestors which are yours, not mine; a white-haired man and woman; one helpless, despised, golden-haired little child, gazing up into the face of a beautiful woman sitting in a high-back, heavily-carved chair, and in her arms—those arms that never during the remembrance of her daughter closed about her—a black-haired boy. That mother-face is distorted with a mad rage, and hatred gleams in the dark eyes as she shrinks from the touch of her only daughter and cries—O God! those cries will haunt me until my death: 'See, the same expression! I have seen it a thousand times on his face. Take her away, take her away before I hate her more than I do now!' "

The girl staggered as she finished, and King started to put his arms about her, but she pushed him away.

"You were a woman of wealth and position. I was your child born in wedlock, and yet you thrust me forth from your love and home, my heritage to be that awful memory." She raised her arms above her head and looked wildly at the mother.

The Earl approached her, his noble young face beaming with tenderness and love.

"Sister, darling," he said, holding out his hands and speaking very gently, "Let a new picture take the place of the old. I have had a dim memory of that past, and came to America to seek for a sister whom I remembered as golden-haired. All that I have shall be shared with you. Poor, persecuted little girl! let me try to make up to you for all this misery by a boundless love," and he held out his arms to her.

Queenie looked at him with an expression which brought tears into the eyes of every one except Litchfield, who stood in the shadow, but shook his head.

"Nothing can give me back the years of misery when I ate out my childish heart with mortification and shame. Did I ask to be brought into this world?" she cried, turning to her mother. "Was it my fault that I was bred of animalism and repulsion?" The Countess looked as though she were going to faint, and her son sprung to her.

It was a dramatic scene. In a huge red leather chair sat the beautiful Countess in her black velvet and point lace; by her side was the handsome young lord, with a protecting arm across the back of the chair; by another door stood Litchfield, stern and unrelenting, his lips set in a straight line. Occupying the center of the room stood the little figure of a slight girl, who seemed to concentrate in herself all the fires of the universe. In her great, and, as it could not but appear, justifiable, anger, she seemed an avenging spirit sent from above to seek restitution. By her side, with his young face drawn and worn, was Kingsley Wadsworth, ready to protect with his life his promised wife, who held his honor in her keeping if not his heart.

"Had you strangled the life from my little body when I was born, the gallows would have claimed you, but there is no punishment for your murder of my soul. Fatherless, motherless, with an old, seared woman's heart in my puny body, no wonder I grew up hating every one, loathing myself. No"—here the pitiful little face took a new, tender expression—"no, no, I did not hate all. All the love of my poor, stunted life was poured out on one," and she stretched out her hand to King, who took it and clasped it tenderly in his own.

The Countess sat upright in her chair and began in a voice so changed that not even her own son recognized it:

"You are right in all you have said, and I can make no excuse." The Earl drew a long breath, and his arm dropped from her chair to his side. King tenderly drew Queenie into a chair and stood by her side, still holding her hand in his.

"I not only have no excuse to offer, but I also feel no remorse," the Countess said in that strange, low voice.

"Mother!" the Earl cried indignantly.

"Absolutely none. I am a proud woman, and I cannot bend my pride. Were it to be done over again I would do exactly as I did, although, save for her and one other, I do not believe I dislike a single being in all this world."

A low, cruel laugh came from Queenie as the mother finished, and the still more cruel words:

"It is easy to imagine who that other is—my father, the erstwhile groom, and yet, Madam, there was a time when your pride did bend very low indeed, and you felt anything but loathing for this other, unless the history of your life be incorrectly reported."

"Queenie, Queenie, have mercy! That is horrible," King said hastily, dropping on one knee and looking into the wild eyes.

"Cruel? Of course it is cruel. I wanted it to be cruel. What is there in her conduct to make me spare her? She did not spare me." Queenie rose and, stretching out her hand toward the Countess, continued in intense tones: "A mother's curse was pronounced upon me, why not a daughter's upon her?"

"Stop, Queenie, stop—for my sake stop! Come, you love me; by that love I adjure you. By what is the most sacred thing in your life, I beg and pray of you to be merciful. When the thoughts of your love fill your heart, there can be no room for evil ones," and King caught the outstretched arm and tried to draw her back in her chair.

"Is there no room for evil thoughts in that heart?" Thomas Litchfield then broke in, stepping forward and looking at the girl. "Kingsley Wadsworth, before you believe that, ask this wronged woman what Gertrude Stirling's love has cost you," and he opened the door by which he had been standing, and there stood Clover, pale and trembling, older and with lines of suffering on her face, but as sweet and pure as when his lips had last touched hers, before the man who loved her with every drop of blood in his whole body.

"Clover!" he cried, involuntarily stretching out his arms.

The glorious eyes brightened and she said slowly, as though lingering over each letter:

"King!"

"Yes," Litchfield said, his eyes flashing, "ask that woman," pointing a finger at Queenie, who was transfixed at the sight, "what that love has cost you and my poor adopted sister."

King pulled himself together and stepped to Queenie's side.

"Mr. Litchfield," he said with dignity, "I refuse to distress this lady further. Her health, as I told you, is something not to be trifled with, and she has been placed under intense excitement tonight. Her anger against so heartless a mother is very justifiable, and I must confess I cannot see the propriety in subjecting her to repeated insults."

"Tom's face softened as he looked at the gallant young man, turning so bravely from love to duty, but he replied earnestly:

"And my sister?"

The strong man trembled, and his voice shook, but he replied bravely:

"Some terrible mistake has parted us forever. Tomorrow we," laying his hand on Queenie's, "are to be married."

At these words Clover shivered and grew as pale as Queenie, but no sound issued from her bloodless lips, and Tom, hastening to her, placed her in a seat before he resumed:

"Believe me, Wadsworth, I am not seeking to avenge, but simply to do justice. Do you love your mother?"

King looked up eagerly. His love for his mother was one of his strongest feelings.

"Yes, I know you do. Do you feel faint, Miss Stirling?" he asked, turning to Queenie, who impatiently shook her head, although there was a terrified expression in her eyes.

"Then," he continued, "what words have you for one who would seek her life?"

"My God, Litchfield, this is beyond endurance! Are we prisoners and you prosecuting attorney that you ask us such questions? Stand aside!" picking up Queenie's cloak. "I utterly refuse to stay another minute and have my promised wife subjected to so much excitement. Stand aside, I say, and let us pass," and so saying, King drew Queenie's hand through his arm and started to leave the room.

The Earl started to say something, when his mother pressed his hand, and Litchfield replied, and in his voice was intense pity and loathing:

"Wadsworth, believe me, I have the best motives in acting as I have. Ask the lady on your arm if she would not prefer to remain here. Real prosecuting attorneys would not be as lenient as I."

Without a word Queenie withdrew her hand, and, throwing aside her cloak, went back unaided to her chair, and King followed, his face distorted by conflicting emotions.

"May I ask Miss Stirling," Litchfield resumed, "if she has ever traveled in India?"

The concluding chapters of this remarkable story will be found in next week's Ledger. Our free cameras and patterns are still being sent to all new subscribers, as advertised on pages thirteen and fifteen.

Then He Bought One.

"George," said the fair maid in the parlor scene, "I wish you wouldn't knock at the front door hereafter when you call."

"But what shall I do?" asked the dense young man.

"Well, you might enter with a ring," suggested the bunch of feminine loveliness.

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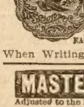

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"CLEANING HOUSE"

A Change of Food Cleans the Soul's House.

When the body is clogged up by the use of improper food and sickness sets in there is nothing so good as a "house cleaning" and the right way to do this is to change the food, for although taking medicines may afford temporary relief a complete change of food is much the surest and safest way.

The highest medical authority in the world, "The Lancet," of London, says of Grape-Nuts: "Our analysis shows it is a nutritive of a high order since it contains the constituents of a complete food in very satisfactory and rich proportion and in an easy assimilable state." "About two years ago," says a resident of Springville, Ind., "I had terrible stomach trouble and although I tried all kinds of medicines none of them cured me. I was so run down I could not eat, got very little sleep, and was dizzy-headed and miserable all of the time. About that time a friend told me that the only way to cure my trouble was to change my food, and recommended Grape-Nuts.

"From my very first meal of Grape-Nuts my stomach began to get better and all the improvements that come from a healthy stomach in place of an unhealthy one soon followed, and this was not all, for just as great an improvement came in my brain. All of the dizziness is gone and my brain is now clear and active. I can eat anything I want, sleep well and am altogether a new man mentally and physically.

"At the time I commenced to use this food I was nothing but a skeleton weighing 130 pounds but now I have got back my normal weight of nearly 200." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

There's a reason.

Look in each package for a copy of the famous little book, "The Road to Wellville."

Had a Grievance.

A cook who had numerous receipts,
For serving fish, poultry and meipts,
Exclaimed in surprise
When asked to make pies:
"Why, I wasn't engaged to cook sweipts!"

CONSTIPATION.

Its Cause and Cure.

A person in order to be healthy must get rid of the waste products (or poisons) of the body. Nature has provided four ways to get rid of them: The Bowels, the Kidneys, the Bladder and the pores of the Skin. If the bowels become inactive, that portion of the food which should be thrown off lies in the intestines and decomposes, causing blood, nerve, liver and kidney trouble, and closes the pores of the skin, thus creating disease in the entire system.

You can immediately relieve and permanently cure yourself of stubborn constipation or distressing stomach trouble and perfectly regulate your kidneys and liver by taking one dose a day of Drake's Palmetto Wine. Any reader of the Chicago Ledger can secure absolutely free a bottle by writing to Drake Formula Co., Drake Building, Chicago.

A Free trial bottle alone has brought health and vigor to many, so you owe it to yourself to prove what it will do in your case.

Write the company this very day.

Double-Quick.

"Yes, the Tie-Rantt Company gave a production of Hamlet in Gory Gulch."

"Did the ghost walk?"

"No, it ran. Some one started shooting."

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ONE MILLION CURED CASES.

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I have just published a little book in regard to this blessed truth called "A Message of Health and Healing." If you write to me I will gladly send you a copy free. It gives many interesting facts and convincing testimonials. Enclose 2-cent stamp for postage. S. A. Jefferson, C. S. B., Suite 604, 112 Dearborn street, Chicago, Ill.

Disappointed.

"Yes, indeed," pouted the girl who was gathering chestnuts, "Harold is too mean for anything."

"What now?" asked her chum with the football colors.

"Why, last night in the vestibule he said 'This is the last kiss.' "

"Well——"

"And it really was."

Dancing Not Always Wicked.

Miss Gallie—"Do you really believe that dancing is in itself wicked?"

Deacon Dogood (solemnly)—"N—o, not in itself, perhaps. In fact, there may have been cases in which dancing could have been unhesitatingly declared not all wicked."

"I am delighted to hear that. Won't you mention one of them?"

"Well, for instance, I do not think we could reasonably blame the blessed martyrs if any of them danced on the hot plowshares."

A Passing Cloud.

First Visitor (angrily)—"If you hadn't pushed me away, I'd got in my bet on Lightfoot. I'll settle with you on the first chance I get."

Second Visitor (hotly)—"I'll settle with you sir. Your pushing prevented me from betting on Lightfoot."

First Visitor (two minutes later. Lightfoot beaten)—"Say, have a cigar."

Second Visitor (genially)—"Have one with me."

Justice, With Mercy.

Magistrate—"You are charged with having sixteen wives. What have you to say for yourself, sir?"

Prisoner—"I really couldn't help myself, judge."

"Nonsense!"

"It was this way. Five years ago I went to a summer resort, and for six weeks I was the only man there."

"Discharged."

A Change of Opinion.

"Papa, have—have you seen Harold since you told him he was too poor to think of—of marrying me?"

"Yes; I ran across him at the club last evening. We got into conversation, and he struck me—er——"

"Struck you! Oh, papa!"

"Struck me as quite an agreeable young man. I understand his uncle has left him two hundred thousand."

Magazine Limitations.

Magazine Editor—"We need a leading article for next month."

Regular Contributor—"I can prepare an elaborate historical sketch of Napoleon."

"Won't do. Two much like news."

"Might work up something on Solomon."

"Too modern."

"All right, I'll get up an illustrated article on Adam."

Not in the Swim.

Mrs. Suddenrich—"I never heard no such way of talkin' as you've got into at boardin' school."

Daughter—"I've learned to speak as the teachers do."

Mrs. Suddenrich—"Well, jus' drop it. Them poverty-stricken hirelings don't move in our set."

A Little Previous.

"Well," said the doctor, "how do you feel to-day?"

"Oh, doctor," replied the patient, wearily, "I am suffering the torments of the damned."

"What! Already?" inquired the doctor, pleasantly.

Courting Etiquette.

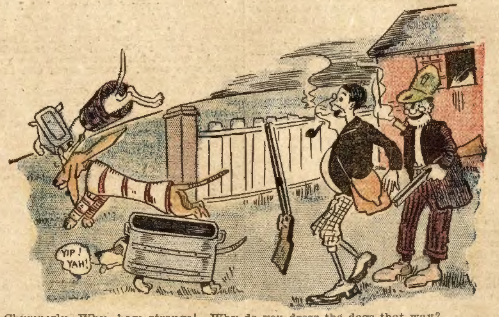
She (whose father keeps a dog)—Why do you bring your man with you when you call on me?

Chappie—He has to walk behind me as I go out.

Another Brute.

Wife—I'd just like to know where these contemptible jokers get their ideas of mother-in-laws.

Husband—Um—I don't know. Perhaps they used to be divorce-court reporters.



Chumperly—Why, how strange! Why do you dress the dogs that way?
The Guide—Oh, that's to save them from being killed by amatoor shootsmen.

Two of a Kind.

"A man needn't be afraid of lightning so long as he can see it approaching," said the would-be humorist.

"Same way with a bullet," observed the solemn party with a far-off look in his off optic.

He Explains.

Harold—Good morning. I think you are the girl that discarded me last summer.

Jessie—You still here? Why, you told me you couldn't live without me.

Harold—I am not living; just existing in St. Louis.

On the Campus.

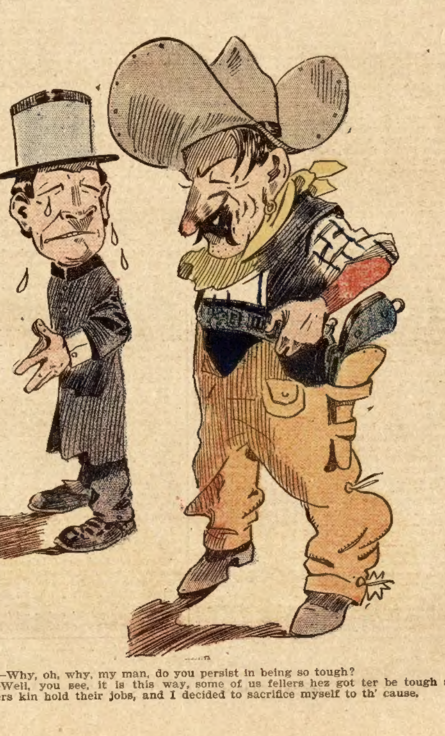
Fred LaCrosse—Your aunt is a dear, innocent old lady, isn't she, Jack?

Jack Punt—Yes, indeed. Why, she actually thinks a young man needs books at college.

In the Parlor, Too.

New Boarder—What is the landlady's daughter playing?

Old Boarder——A mixture of airs from a lot of old operas—a sort of musical hash, you know.



Goodly—Why, oh, why, my man, do you persist in being so tough?
Badly—Well, you see, it is this way, some of us fellers hez got ter be tough so th' preachers kin hold their jobs, and I decided to sacrifice myself to th' cause.

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JOLLITY
WEIR.

His Worldly Feat.

The great throngs passing through the pearly gates had pushed the trust magnate to the extreme edge of the silver cloud.

"Look here, Saint Peter," he protested wildly, "do you think I can stand on a space no larger than a dollar?"

"That should be very easy for you," replied the venerable gatekeeper. "Your records show that down on earth you used to stand on a cent."

He Was Satisfied.

Uncle Remus was driving a white mule hitched to an ancient gig.

"That's a very old affair in these days of progress," remarked the stranger.

"Doan' matter wid me," drawled the old man, contentedly puffing his pipe; "dis heah gig kin jolt es much as de finest automobile en dat der mule kin bray loudah den de biggest hohn."

Circumstances Alter Cases.

"Yes," said the tramp who was explaining his graft, "I always tell de lady of de house dat I was injured on de field."

"What field?" asked the newcomer on the road.

"Well, if it's a young lady I say football field an' if it's an old lady I say battlefield."

A Severe Test.

Winkers—"How did Van Brief make such a failure of politics?"

Binkers—"His head was so full of legal phraseology that when he started to make a speech, he used the same style of language."

"Well?"

"Well, the campaign was over before he could say anything."

A Rare Catch.

Friend—"You said you didn't love him."

Smart Girl—"I don't."

"You respect him perhaps?"

"Not particularly."

"And yet you intend to marry him?"

"I do. He told me his mother always got her biscuits at the baker's."

A Diet Fit for the Great.

Cholly (in the restaurant)—Bah the way, the papah says King Edward, by the doctah's orders, eats nothing but the plainest food.

Algy—Waitah—Corned beef and cabbage.

Tough Times.

Baker (disconsolately)—I never saw times so hard.

Wife—You have plenty of trade.

Baker—Y-e-s, but flour has got so cheap that I will either have to stop baking bread or lower the price.

Point of View.

"Kissing," said the coy maid, "should be strictly private."

"Oh, I don't know," rejoined the strenuous youth. "Just think what we would have missed if the the discoverer of kissing had never made it public."

Bright Boy.

Teacher—Now, Jerry Simpson, how many feet has man?

Jerry—Well, colored men generally have three feet.

Teacher (astonished)—Three?

Jerry—Yes, two of their own and one rabbit foot.

Three of a Kind.

Stubb—Who were those three ragged men up the road?

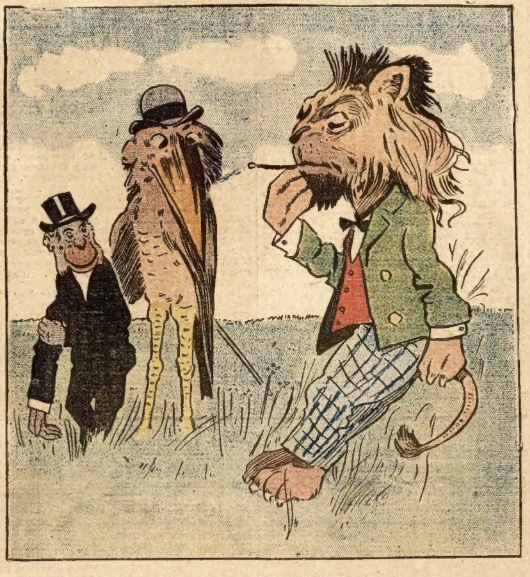
Penn—One was a tramp, the other had been in a class rush and the third had been automobile racing.

Something Wrong.

Ernie—I don't believe Willie is sensible.

Ida—Why not?

Ernie—He didn't act foolish when he made love.



"Enjoying your after-dinner cigar?" commented the monkey.

"Yes," said the lion, who had brought many civilized habits with him when he and the other animals escaped from the circus.

"But where do you find cigars in the jungle?" asked the bird.

"Oh, it was in my dinner's pocket."

Why Thereof.

"What," asked the inquisitive person, "is the difference between a thief and a kleptomaniac?"

"The former steals to live," replied the wise guy, "and the latter lives to steal."

In the Ruck.

Friend—What do you call that horse?

Owner—Bookmaker.

Friend—That's an odd name. Why do you call him that?

Owner—Because he follows the races.

Dead Easy.

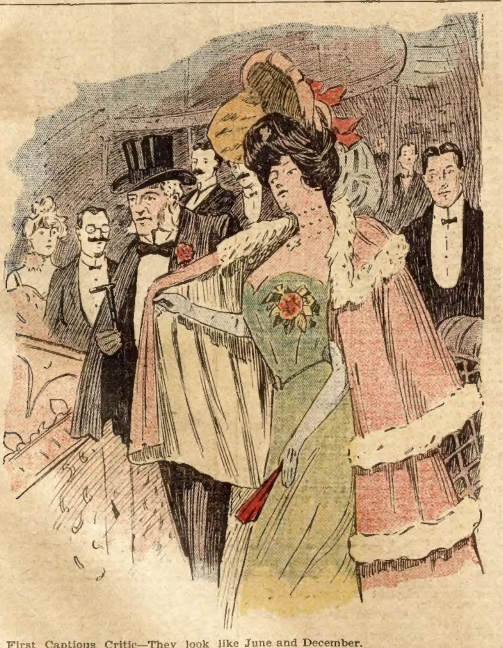
"How," asked the very young man, "can one tell when love is only platonic?"

"When it develops into the other kind," replied the charming widow, "one can look back and see the difference."

No Laughing Matter.

"I thought you would surely laugh at that little joke," said the humorist, as the editor solemnly glanced at the manuscript.

"Not me," rejoined the man behind the blue pencil. "I never laugh at an old friend."



First Captious Critic—They look like June and December.
Second Captious Critic—That's right, she's a peach and he's a frost.

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You've seen my Ads everywhere and know I am reliable. Want at once 1,000 good, honest people, who want to start in a business of their own, to mail out circulars, fill orders, etc., by mail, evenings and spare time. All can do it. Age, sex or locality make no difference. I furnish goods, circulars, stationery, etc., and give full information how MANY MAKE from $50 to $100 a Week. I've been in the Mail Order Business 25 years, and have a plan that should enable you to start under my direction and make more money with less work than any other business on earth. Prospectus, Samples, etc., FREE. JAMES LEE, Dep. 721 Omaha Bldg., Chicago.

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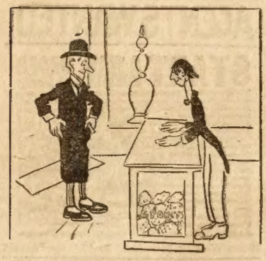
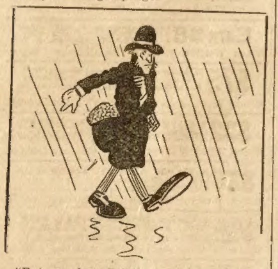
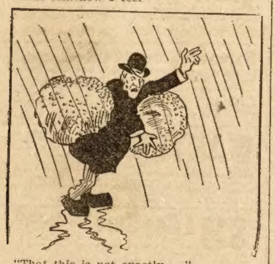


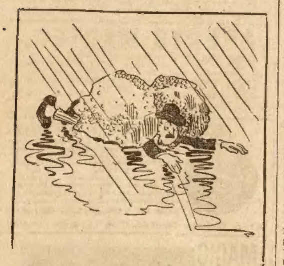
Mr. Dubbley—I promised my wife I'd buy a couple of large sponges——



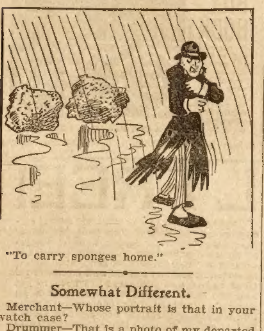
"But somehow I feel——



"That this is not exactly——"



"The sort of day to try——



"To carry sponges home."

Somewhat Different.

Merchant—Whose portrait is that in your watch case?

Drummer—That is a photo of my departed wife.

Merchant—Ah, indeed! How long has she been dead?

Drummer—Dead! Say, if you had to foot her hotel bill at a summer resort as I do you'd think she was very much alive. See?

Another Sherlock Holmes.

"Have you any evidence against the prisoner?"

"None," answered the detective.

"Then why did you arrest him?"

"It's a great idea of my own. When the real criminal sees an innocent man in trouble, maybe he'll come forward and confess."

BORN IN MYSTERY;

Or, The Heiress of Claremont Hall.

By Libbie Sprague Phillips.

(Copyright by W. D. Boyce Co.)

Begun in No. 42, Oct. 17. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be procured from news stands, or our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

Marian gazed from the window of the crowded car like one in a dream. Her brain whirled—it was impossible to arrange her thoughts. Last night, only a few hours ago, she was the queen of a brilliant throng, loved, honored and perfectly happy; now she was the child of shame and reproach, and sick with the awful weight of her misery and woe. Ah! it was a heavy burden that the sins and the follies of others had laid on that beautiful drooping head.

Had she been brought up to bear it, it would not have seemed so hard. And thus she told Agnes, when, at the close of the following day they arrived at Claremont Hall, and Lottie had briefly explained their hurried return.

"Oh, Auntie," she wailed, "why did you not tell me the truth when I was a child? I could have borne it then; but now the thought of what I really am burns and blisters my heart like fire. It will eat my life away; it will kill me!"

This was the first complaint she had made. All through the long homeward journey she had sat dry-eyed and silent, and Lottie had feared that the poor girl's reason would give way under the strain of that enforced, unnatural calmness. Now she threw herself into Agnes' arms and wept as she had never done before and as she never did again; wept for her vanished happiness, for the wreck of her hopes and love.

Tears brought relief to the burning brain and after she had exhausted herself with her bitter weeping, she still lay in Agnes' arms like a tired child; while loving words, spoken in low, soothing tones, fell from Agnes' lips as she tried to tell her of her mother's life and of her own firm belief in her purity and honor.

Major Claremont listened to what had happened with a thoughtful look upon his face. Then he shut himself in the library, as he always did when he was troubled, and after thinking deeply for several hours, he sent for Agnes to come to him.

"I am going to New York," he said, "to obtain a copy of the record of Marian Blake's marriage. The world shall know, and that child shall have the blessed assurance that there is no shame attached to her birth."

Ah, was the secret of Edgar Manning's sinful life about to be made known at last; for she knew that as soon as it had been proven that Marian Blake had been a lawful, legal wife, the question would then arise: Who and what was her husband?

"If you do that," she replied, "those Remingtons, if Charlie holds to his determination to make Marian his wife, will move Heaven and earth to learn who Edgar Manning was; they will be satisfied with nothing less than his whole life history."

"Well, let them. Ellis Deering has never actually disgraced his name that I know of, if he did prove himself to be false and unprincipled. I guess they will find that the Deering name stands as high on the roll of honor as the name of Remington."

"Then you still hold to the idea that Ellis Deering was Marian's father?"

"Certainly. I have never had any other; and her resemblance to our family has strengthened that idea and made me sure that I am right. Many years ago one of the Deerings wedded a Claremont, and although several generations lie between, I have heard that Ellis Deering's father had the same black, flashing eyes that have always distinguished our race. I have never mentioned this before because I knew that it would take many years to destroy your faith in Ellis, but it surely must have perished by this time; you ought to be able to think and to see clearly now that Ellis Deering was unworthy of your love, and knowing this, the proof of his falseness will not wring your heart as it would have done years ago."

The proof of his falseness! Somehow her father's words struck a chill to her heart. Could it be possible that her father was right, after all! Could it be that Ellis Deering had wedded Marian Blake under an assumed name, and, by mere chance, had assumed the same name as that of the man who had committed the heartless murder.

"You surely do not object to my doing this," he asked, as she sat with downcast face and made no reply. "I think I shall be able to prove that Ellis Deering and Edgar Manning were one and the same. It is clear to me that he never intends to return, and a complete and certain knowledge of his treachery cannot harm you now, while a name would be something of priceless worth to Marian. You wonder, I suppose, why I take so much interest in the happiness and the welfare of this child whom once I spurned; but the mistakes, the sins and the follies of my own life which were revealed to me in such a startling manner have caused me to be careful how I judge others. I feel that my pride and unbending will were the means of killing my boy, and to atone for that sin, I mean to do all I can for the child who resembles him so greatly. Of course, as soon as it becomes generally known that Ellis Deering deserted you and eloped with Marian Blake, and that they were actually married, there will be a great deal of gossip that will be very unpleasant for you; but for their child's sake, I feel that the truth should now be made known."

It seemed to Agnes that her heart actually stopped beating. Her father's confident manner impressed her strangely. She had never known before that the Deerings and the Claremonts were in any way related. This would explain Marian's resemblance to the Claremont family in a sensible way; and for a moment she sat speechless and dumb while she slowly realized that her faith in Ellis had received a crushing blow, the faith that she had cherished all these years in the man she loved. Was it slipping from her?

But her father was waiting for her to speak. "Do what you think is right," she answered, with a forced calmness; then after forcing back a sob that threatened to choke her, she added: "I can endure anything that will bring happiness to Marian. But go at once, let everything be cleared up as soon as possible—that is, if it can be done."

"I shall go tomorrow," he replied, as Agnes was about to leave the room, "and I shall sift the matter thoroughly."

Ah, what would the sifting reveal? What did she hope for? She hardly knew. The revelation meant added misery to either Marian or herself; it would either show Marian's father to have been a criminal of the deepest dye, or show that her lover had been false and untrue.

PART VIII.

How mistaken her father was in supposing that a certain knowledge of Ellis' unworthiness could cause her no pain, no heartache now! True, eighteen long years had passed since the day on which she had received the letter releasing her from her engagement to him, the letter that had stabbed her heart in a cruel way; but time had failed to heal the wound, had even failed to dull the edge of bitter memories.

But, as weak and trembling, she ascended the stairs to her own room, she felt that nothing could add to the misery which she was suffering now. A complete and certain knowledge that Ellis had been false to her could be no worse than this cruel uncertainty; for the hope which she had always clung to, that he would even yet return true to her, seemed now to be dying and slipping from her, and she realized, sadly, how very much that hope had been to her. Ah! she had lived upon it. What should she do when once it had perished forever? Life, for her, had been a continuous trial, the moments of respite seemed only to substitute the weight of dread for the weight of actual suffering. And she had dreaded this time so long, the time when the mystery of Marian's birth should be cleared away, revealing nothing but an added weight of woe. But looking at the matter from her father's point of view, the woe threatened her now instead of Marian. She was but human after all, and in spite of her great love for the unfortunate child, she found herself shrinking from the blow that would strike from her own life the faith and hope on which she had lived so many years.

But for Marian's sake she must bear it. As her father had said, a name would be something of priceless worth to her. And taking up a pencil that was lying near her, she aimlessly traced upon a piece of paper the name—"Marian Agnes Deering." Then, as she gazed at it, while confused thoughts were tearing at her heart, a big teardrop fell from her eyes upon the word, "Marian," making of it a complete blot, and the remaining words of the name, "Agnes Deering," seemed to stare at her in a mocking way.

"Agnes Deering!" She repeated the name softly to herself, and again the tear drops fell. Once she had hoped to write her own name thus; but hope was dying, faith was dying and love—ah! would that it, too, could die! Then all the pain and wretchedness would end.

But she must bear it, and though her heart was heavy with the burden of remembered sorrow, she resolved to bear with patience and fortitude the new load which the coming days might bring her.

But it was with the very fever of impatience that she awaited her father's return. Often, during the days of waiting, she would think over all the facts of the case with great care, and she would feel that her father was mistaken, that Ellis could not possibly have been such a villain; then again those same facts would stand forth in another light and the hope which had been for a moment revived, would be crushed again.

But at last, after an absence of three weeks, he returned.

"I have a copy of the marriage record," he told Agnes, as she joined him in the library on the night of his return, "but I

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did not meet with the success I had hoped for in proving that the man she married was really Ellis Deering. It is nineteen years since that marriage took place, and after so long a time, it will be a difficult matter to find any one who knew them. But I have a detective at work, and I hope for good results. I succeeded in finding the old clergyman who performed the marriage ceremony. I showed him a portrait of Ellis and asked him if he could remember having ever seen the original. He was sure that he had, but could not recall when or where. I then asked him if he remembered having united in marriage a couple whose names were Edgar Manning and Marian Blake. He remembered that well. 'And this is a portrait of the bridegroom, if I remember right,' he said; but he was unwilling to swear to it, positively. I then went to the hotel where, years ago, I found the names of Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Manning recorded. The hotel is still run by the same man, and the old registers have been kept, and the detective is searching for people whose names were recorded on the register at that time. Everything will soon be cleared up, I hope, in fact, I am sure it will. Now, had we better tell Marian of this record or wait until we have learned for a certainty who Edgar Manning was?"

Agnes hesitated before replying. It might take many months, perhaps years, to prove what her father hoped to prove, during which time Marian's heart would be slowly breaking. On the other hand, she could not rid herself entirely of the thought that after all her father might be mistaken in his belief, and that the name on that marriage record was one, from which, if the truth was ever made known, the poor child would shrink with horror.

But Marian's pale face, with its look of awful misery haunted her. Something must be done, let the consequence be what it would.

"I do not think," she said, at length, "that it would be wise to tell her that you think the name recorded here was an assumed name; time enough for that when the fact has been proved. I would give her the record as it is, and give it to her now. She has suffered so much from thinking that perhaps she had no right to any name; this record will be more to her than stores of countless gold."

The Major thought on the subject for a moment, and then he shook his head.

"She would naturally want that record published," he said, "and her mother's name cleared at once. This would cause a great excitement. Perhaps ere this had died away, I would be able to prove what I hope to prove, and this would cause an excitement still greater. Better have it all over with at once. I think we had better not say anything about this whatever, at present. She has a right to the Deering name, I feel sure of it, and if that detective does his work well, she shall have it."

"Perhaps you are right," she answered, wearily, vainly striving to keep back the tears that had risen to her eyes; but as her father left the room now, she laid her head over against the window and wept bitterly, hardly knowing why she wept, whether the tears were for Marian or herself or for the lover whose name, she feared, was about to be coupled with treachery and deceit.

She felt inclined to call her father back and tell him of the dark story connected with the name of Edgar Manning, but she finally concluded that she would not. She had kept the secret all these years, she would keep it awhile longer and see what time might reveal.

How her heart ached for Marian, who neither wept nor complained, but who, as the days went by, wandered sad-eyed and silent, from one room to another, as though she knew not what to do to pass away the time.

But there came a day when that unnatural calm was broken. Being summoned to the drawing room one evening in the early spring, she shrunk back as if a blow had been struck at her at finding herself alone, face to face with Charlie Remington.

"Marian! my own dear love!" And the arms that would not be resisted, drew her to him.

For just a moment she lay within those loving arms, silent and still, while his kisses were rained upon her face; then she drew herself away.

"Oh, Charlie!" she cried, why did you come? Why have you sought me when it can only bring added pain to us both?"

"Then you are not glad to see me, Marian?"

"Glad to see you? Oh, Heaven! how glad I would be under different circumstances! Don't tempt me, Charlie. I felt a moment ago when your dear arms were round me as though I would like to rest there forever, and from that stronghold bid defiance to all the world outside it. But I can not, I must not. I am not cruel enough for that."

"Cruel, Marian? In what way would that be cruel?"

"Do you think, Charlie Remington, that I would drag you down from your high position in the social world, would let you sacrifice all your bright prospects—for you would lose everything if you married me—friends, wealth, position—everything. You would feel the loss after awhile and curse me for it."

"Never, Marian! I might, as you say, lose all those things, but I should never think of the loss, it would be so immeasurably outweighed by all that I should gain. Believe me, little girl, you are worth more to me than all the whole wide world beside. I shall never give you up—never! You must, you shall be mine!"

"Oh, Charlie, don't! Why do you tempt me so when I am so weak? How am I to resist your love, when I want it so? And yet I must! I must! I ran away from you, Charlie, because I felt that I must save myself from this great temptation, and now—oh, Charlie! why did you come?"

"Why did I come? And again he wound his arms around her. "I came, darling, because nothing could keep me away, because I wanted you and meant to have you. I should have come long before this, but I met with an accident on the day when, as you say, you ran away from me; I was thrown from my horse as I was madly galloping through the streets trying to cool the fever of indignation that was burning within me, and my head was badly hurt. I have been very ill; I am far from being strong, even now, but I could stay away no longer. Now, little girl, have some pity, kiss me and bid me welcome."

Poor Marian! As his lips were now pressed to her own, she felt herself growing weaker and weaker. How her soul had thirsted for just such happiness as this. What was she to do? How could she give up a love like this, so true, so utterly regardless of circumstances? She felt her strength deserting her and her brain grew dizzy; all she had believed so easy to say, all the convincing arguments, the eloquent words that had occurred of themselves when she had resolved to give him up, now eluded her paralyzed will, and she lay, weak and trembling, within his arms with her head resting on his shoulder and one little hand pressed against the dear face that was bent so close to her own.

"Oh, Charlie, how weak I am; weak and sinful; for it is wicked to allow you to kiss me thus and to return those kisses, when I know well that I must send you from me! And you must go, Charlie, go and forget me. Some day you will love another; you should save your kisses for her, and I—oh! Charlie!"

And she placed her hands over her eyes as though she would shut out the vision of that other who might some day claim his love and his kisses, while burning tears trickled through her white fingers, and a stifled sob broke from her lips.

Charlie said not a word, but stepping to the door, he told a servant who was passing in the hall to ask Major Claremont to come to him, then as the Major entered the room, he grasped his extended hand, and said, abruptly:

"I love your granddaughter, Major Claremont, and I have come to ask your consent to our marriage. Will you give her to me?"

"Charlie Remington, what are you saying?" Marian sprang to her feet as she said this and tremblingly grasped his arm. "Tell me, what are you trying to do?"

"I am trying to make you my wife in spite of yourself," he answered. "Major, may I have her?"

In spite of the gravity of the situation, Major Claremont had to smile.

"I wish to God, young man," he answered, "that she was my granddaughter, there would be no reason then why she should not be your wife, and I feel that I could not give her to a nobler man!"

"There is no reason, as it is, why she should not be my wife. What do you suppose I care who her ancestors were! I am not seeking wealth, honor or social position. I am seeking a wife—the woman I love—and the question is, may I have her?"

"No," interrupted Marian, "you are not seeking wealth, honor or social position; these are blessings which now are yours, and you are seeking to do that which will deprive you of them, and I shall not let you. Grandpapa, help me! Tell him that he cannot have me!"

"My poor child!" And the Major laid his hand tenderly on her head. "Do you love him, Marian?"

"Yes, I do; I love him too well to marry him, and in so doing ruin his life."

"Arguments are useless," said Charlie, again addressing the Major, "life surely would be nothing to me without her. Are you going to give your consent, Major Claremont?"

"Then the fact that her birth is wrapped in mystery has no weight against your love for her?"

"None whatever. I love her, I want her, and I mean to have her."

Again the Major smiled.

"Then I give my consent," he answered, "and may Heaven bless you both!"

"Oh, Grandpapa, how could you! Now, I have two to fight against! Charlie, you must be crazy! If you should marry me you would be disinherited, your father said so. They would consider that you had disgraced them all, and they would hate me as being the means of that disgrace; and after you had come to fully realize what you had done, you would hate me, too. What should I do then? What could I do? It would be too late then to remedy the wrong that I had done—too late! But I can give you up now, Charlie, and the thought that I am doing right will keep my heart from breaking; on the other hand, if you should marry me and then repent of having done so, it would kill me!"

Charlie bent and kissed the flushed face. "Every argument you bring to bear but makes me the more determined to have you for my own," he said. "Let the years prove how true my love will be, Marian; it shall never fail!"

"You think so now, but——"

"Wait, Marian!" the Major interrupted. "Matters are not quite so bad as you think. There is no shame attached to your birth; your mother was legally married and I have a record of her marriage in my possession. That record is what I went to New York for in the winter. I did not tell you before, because I have every reason to believe that your father married under an assumed name. I am trying to prove this. If I succeed and your father is the man whom I have always thought was your father, you will have a name that you need not blush to own, a name every bit as honorable as that of Remington. In the meantime, if you two love each other, I see no reason why you should not become engaged."

Marian's face was a study. At first a look of wonder overspread her features, which gradually gave place to a look of hope and joy. Agnes had told her the night on which she had returned from that fatal visit to the Remingtons, that she was sure that her mother had been married, but she had not told her that the marriage had been recorded, that proof of the marriage could be obtained

"And my name?" she asked, smiling through her tears, "that is, the name recorded—what is it?"

"Manning," he answered, "an assumed name, I am sure. I never knew any one of that name, and I am equally sure that your mother never did. The man whom I have always supposed was your father was engaged to another girl; it is my belief that your mother, Marian Blake, in some way won his affections and they eloped together; then I suppose a dread of having his own people and the girl whom he had deserted learn of what he had done, prompted him to change his name. Agnes, of course, has told you the story of how your mother returned alone and died, leaving you in her care. To tell you the truth, Marian, I did not want you then, a little nameless baby, as I thought, but Agnes was firm and overruled my objections completely; it was then that I made inquiries in regard to your mother's marriage. I found the record of that marriage, as I have told you. I also learned that the man, whom I have always suspected, accompanied her to the city, and it was this same man who paid her bills at the hotel where she boarded, and who after she became ill, took her from the hotel and sent her home. I should have had this story published at the time, and your mother's name cleared of the dark stains of dishonor, but out of consideration for the girl who had been cruelly deserted by your father when he wedded Marian Blake, I kept silent; besides, I did not love you then as I do now. Then as the years went on, and you grew up believing that you were my grandchild, which was but natural that you should under the circumstances, I shrank from telling you that you were not, you seemed to be so proud of the dear old home, proud of the name you bore, proud of being my grandchild, and, oh, Marian! I wish you were. I wish you were."

Here the old man's voice grew husky and his eyes grew dim, and Marian, going to his side, twined her arms around his neck and kissed him tenderly.

"I could not love you more if I were," she replied, then turning to Charlie Remington, she extended to him both little hands, which were clasped within his own.

"There is no barrier between us now," he asked, "is there, darling?"

She shook her head, for a moment she was too bewildered to reply. Presently she asked:

"Why did you not tell me this before, Grandpapa; why did you let me suffer so?"

"Agnes wished me to tell you when I first returned from the city," he replied, "but I thought best to wait until the whole mystery had been cleared up. I should not have told you until this had been done if Mr. Remington had not asked me for your hand. I could not consent to give him a nameless wife. But I advise you to say nothing about the record at present; you can be happy in knowing that it exists and in a few weeks, perhaps in a few days, I shall obtain the proof that you belong to one of the best families in the State. Your mother's name shall then be cleared, and you can hold your head as high as the best of them."

"And what of my father; is he living, and where is he?"

"That I do not know. This man whom I suspect came here once when you were but a few weeks old. He stayed but an hour, but he held you in his arms and kissed you tenderly. Then he went away and soon after that we learned that he had gone abroad. Since then we have heard nothing of him. I believe that he is dead, but I do not know."

"And the girl whom he deserted when he married my mother, what became of her, Grandpapa? Is she living yet? Do you know her?"

A shadow fell across the old man's face. "She is living yet, and I know her," he answered, sadly; "some time you shall hear of her, but not tonight. Perhaps Agnes may tell you her story; no one knows it better."

She had asked the question out of curiosity, but something in the old man's voice caused her to really wonder who this girl had been; but no thought came to her that it was Agnes herself who had been made to suffer by her unknown father's faithlessness.

This strange story of love and mystery will be continued in next week's Ledger, leading the reader to some very dramatic and remarkable situations. Every subscriber is entitled to our free cameras and patterns as advertised on pages thirteen and fifteen.

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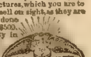

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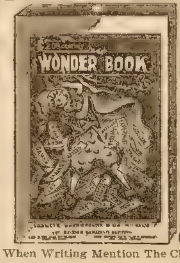

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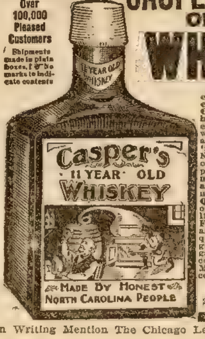

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Boys and Girls Corner

THE SUNKEN CANNON;

Or, HOW SAM PARKER MADE GOOD.

BY ORLANDO R. MORA.

Begun in No. 45, Nov. 7. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be procured from news stands, or our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER XVII.

TWO VIEWS OF SAM PARKER.

"Well, I didn't see anything o' Bennie," said Lem, "an' I couldn't hear nothin' about him. The showmen declare there's no sech boy with 'em."

"The showmen declare, do they? Wall, showmen'll declare anythin' that suits thar purpose. Showmen is bigger liars 'n log-rollers is, Lem," answered Parker. "I hope ye ain't easy-goin' enough to b'lieve showmen. They're a bad lot."

"They may be, but I s'pose they do tell the truth sometimes, when it'll do 'em better'n lyin'," commented Lem.

"Wall, mebby."

"Some of 'em talked awful earnest," Lem went on.

"Likely they kin do that. Did you ever hear airy o' them fakers?"

"Yes; over at Larnsville yistiday." Lem could not repress a laugh. "One of them fellers did old John Fiddlebaugh out o' fourteen dollars in less'n a York minute. Ye see, old John seen a twenty-dollar bill right in the envelope the man had in his hand, an' he kept a biddin' upon the envelope an' what was in it till another feller dropped out, an' John had to bid ag'in or call it off. He was up to thirteen dollars, an' the faker wanted 'im to go on up, but old John was shy. 'Now,' says the faker, 'if thar's a cent o' money in this envelope less'n twenty dollars, I'll give any man that buys it fifty dollars in cold cash,' an' he laid the money on the box right in old John's sight. 'It's a sure thing,' says old John. Then he yelled out, 'Fourteen dollars.' 'Yourn,' says the faker, so quick it made old John's head swim. 'The envelope an' all the money that's in it is yourn. Put up the fourteen, please. Thar's my fifty to back my proposition. Nothin' but money talks here till I git done, then there's always some gents sev'ral dollars to the good that counts their cash an' calls me a fool. But I'm thick-skinned an' I can stand it.' By that time old John had give him the fourteen. 'Thank ye,' said the faker, as he rolled the fourteen up with his fifty an' put it in his pocket. 'Now, I said what I'd do if there was a cent o' money in the envelope less'n twenty dollars, didn't I?' 'Yes,' says old John Fiddlebaugh, 'you did.' 'Open the envelope,' says the faker. Old John opened it, and thar was nothin' in it but a little patch o' court-plaster that the faker said he was advertisin'. Old John Fiddlebaugh hollered good an' loud. 'Not a cent o' money in the envelope less'n twenty dollars,' said the faker. 'I said thar wasn't a cent in it, an' thar wasn't, was there?' 'Thar was not,' said old John. 'You've swindled me an' I'm goin' to——' 'I'll tell ye what yer goin' ter do,' said the faker, laughin', then lookin' awful ugly like an' shiftin' two big revolvers from one pocket to another kind o' careless like. 'You'll quit roarin' or I'll have ye arrested for tryin' to do me out o' six dollars. I can git ye, old man, on a writ o' hocus pokus.' 'Kin he do it?' old John asked Lawyer Alvin that was a-standin' by grinnin'. 'He can't get you on no other kind of a writ,' says Lawyer Alvin, 'an' I reckon if any man can git a writ o' hocus-pokus that feller can. My advice'll cost you two dollars, Mr. Fiddlebaugh, but I'll take it in 'taters.' Then old John Fiddlebaugh began to cuss Lawyer Alvin, an' the faker told the folks 'round that he stood in with the Benighted Snakes Court, an' ef he could ever do 'em a good turn with the judge he'd do it ef it took the shirt off o' some other feller's back. Then the man that had been biddin' against old John, him an' another feller that no one thar knowed got into a scrap an' while the crowd was a cheerin' 'em on the faker got away, an' old John didn't foller him. I think the fight an' the biddin' an' all was a put-up job, Sam."

"So do I, but here comes Zeb. Say, Tunker, did ye hear anything 'bout Bennie?"

"All the showmen I talked with deny knowin' anything about him," said Tunker. "One man said he seen 'im go away with Bill Brand."

"Away? Whar?"

"Away from the show lot an' up the road to'ards Lickintyler's covered bridge. If he went that way, Uncle Jakey may have seen 'im. Uncle Jakey likes all the boys 'round an' stops 'em and lets 'em look through his telescope, an' then takes 'em in the house an' shows 'em a shark's jaw an' a lot o' pictures an' funny tricks an' things. Uncle Jakey Lickintyler's a nice man."

"So he is," asserted Sam.

"You bet he is," exclaimed Lem. "He showed me all them things once an' he let me look at you, Mr. Parker, through his spy-glass. My! how big you was! 'That's the way some folks look to themselves,' Uncle Jakey said, turnin' the glass end for end. 'Now, look ag'in,' says he. You looked awful small then, Sam. 'That's how some folks look to others,' he said."

"Hope he didn't mean nothin' personal," grunted Parker.

"How could he?" asked Tunker, laughing.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ONE ON PARKER.

"Well, I don't believe any o' that about Bennie a-goin' up the road with Bill Brand," said Parker. "The boy's with this here show outfit. That's all thar is to it."

"I'm afraid we ain't goin' to find him here," replied Tunker.

"So'm I," said Lem, earnestly.

"Then they've sent 'im on ahead to other towns. Whar's the show fer a few days?" asked Parker, eagerly.

"I dunno," said Tunker, "but maybe we can find out. Let's go up town."

"Now, Tunker," said Parker, "I don't want this case hurt by no foolishness. Bear in mind that we're here searchin' for Bennie, an' not to answer silly questions about Lem. Ye understand?"

"I do."

"An' ye'll respect my wishes?"

"So far's I'm concerned," replied Tunker, "I leave all talk about Lem between you an' that man."

"An' Lemuel understands," went on Parker, "that a rawhidin'll foller his shootin' off his mouth to that feller, don't ye, Lem?"

"That's what you threatened me with, but I don't think it's quite fair. Now, Sam, if ye didn't know who ye was, an' ye met a man that yo' thought might be able to tell ye, wouldn't ye want to talk with him?"

"I dunno whether I would or not—probably not," declared Sam. "Ye see ye was deserted by yer folks an' might 'a' starved for all they did for ye. Just whar they left ye I took ye away from. It's been me, not them, that's brought ye up an' cared for ye an' sent ye to school an' taught ye how to work an' make yer own livin', if ye had to do it. I'm a decent man, I am, an' 'Lizy's a decent woman. S'pose some o' these tumblin' an' hoss-ridin' circus folks was your relations, an' now yer big enough they could git ye an' l'arn ye to turn summersets an' make ye work for 'em, would ye want to go into sech a bizness? Now, honest, Lem, would ye?"

"No," said Lem, derisively, "I wouldn't like any such life as that. I'd rather do reg'lar work."

"I thought so," answered Sam Parker. "Ye see, thar's ways o' lookin' at everythin', an' then thar's other ways. These folks can't do ye no good. They wouldn't give ye no schoolin' or Sunday schoolin'. Ye know you're plannin' to 'tend the Larnsville school an' git some finishin' touches from Professor Julius Caesar Gaylord. Ye go to Sunday school up to the Rough school house, an' likely you can go to the town Sunday school. Ye know Miss Harriett Wills has been after ye now more'n once. Don't put yerself in no shape to be snatched from all this 'lightenment an' civilization, an' be clapped into no sech crew o' pirates an' cannibals as runs with one o' these circus shows."

"But I might, at least, find out who I am. I ought to know that," said Lem, strenuously.

"Ye might be sorry ye found out," said Parker. "Thar's always two sides to everything. Anyhow, you oughter go slow an' find out about any circus folks that might claim ye—find out all about them, Lem, before you let 'em find out about you. That's the way to do it, ain't it, Mr. Tunker?"

"Looks sensible," answered Tunker, "but I wouldn't want to advise Lem in so grave a matter. Now, Sam, see here." He stepped to one side and signaled for Parker to follow him. "Now," he went on, in a low tone, "s'pose thar was a lot o' money comin' to Lem?"

Parker laughed incredulously.

"Why!" he exclaimed, "no one that had money'd a left a child like that."

"They might, under some circumstances."

"Not likely."

"But maybe they've got well fixed since," suggested Tunker

Parker whistled.

"D'ye think I ought to look into this, Zeb?" he asked, eagerly.

"I think that 'ud be a sensible thing for ye to do," replied Tunker.

"Well, I'll do it, I guess; but I don't want to give 'em any chance at Lem till I find out what they're drivin' at. I'm goin' to send you 'n him back home an' I'll come on the cars, round by way o' Dorning, an' likely git up home on the evenin' train that gits to Larnsville at seven o'clock an' to Winter's Lane, across the river from the Neoga Mill about fifteen minutes later. How will that suit you, Zeb?"

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In case two or more persons are tied for one prize then the prize is equally divided. There is no guess work in this puzzle. It is simply a test of your ability to count figures correctly. Every figure is shown plainly but the figures are mixed up so that it takes a lot of patience and care in order to count them correctly. This contest closes Thursday evening, December 31st, at 5 p. m., and no answers sent after that time will be counted.

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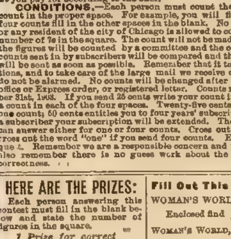

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"It'll do me all right. Lem may not like it. I'm done lookin' for Benny here in Baddison, but, as you say, they've maybe sent the boy ahead to some other town where they may catch up with him in a few days. You look that up, Sam. On the way home I'm goin' to stop at Uncle Jakey 'ckintyler's an' ask Uncle Jakey some uestions. Thar don't many people pass s farm that he don't see, for the bridge is right in front of his house an' he catches em from both sides o' the river, ye know. He knows Bennie well enough."

"Yes, he does, an' if he's seen him he'll tell ye the truth, for thar ain't an honester man from Painted Stake to Neoga P'int."

In fifteen minutes Tunker and Parker had hitched the team to the wagon and Tunker and Lem started over Baddison Hill toward Larnsville. Lem did not like to go, and he kept up a thinking that Zeb Tunker was in no mood to interrupt.

Left alone, Parker watched the unloading of the show and its transportation to Colonel Davinney's lot, where the tents were to be erected. But, though he scanned everything about the outfit closely, he saw nothing suggestive of Bennie.

"What if he was in one o' the cages?" he thought, "but, no, 'tain't likely he is."

As he walked up toward the show lot, one of the big elephants lumbered past him, and the mill-man's curiosity was excited by a huge chain that was wrapped several times about the animal's body, simply as a convenient way to carry it.

"What's that chain round the elephant for?" Sam called out to an attendant who was beside the monster on a horse.

"To keep him from bu'stin'," was the answer.

"One on me," thought Parker. "Wonder if any one heard that?"

CHAPTER XIX.

A SECRET COMPACT.

"I wonder if anybody heard it," repeated Sam Parker. "To keep the elephant from bu'stin'! A good one on me!"

"You bet it was. Ha! ha! ha! That elephant-keeper gets that onto some gawk two or three times every day. 'Twas your turn this time, Mr. Parker."

Parker turned and was confronted by Sim Bowers.

"Jest the man I want to see," said Parker.

"You see me," said Bowers.

"Where d'ye git the other part o' the watch-chain, Mr. Bowers?"

"From Mary Shelton."

"An' who's Mary Shelton?"

"Lem Shelton's mother."

"And who was Lem Shelton's father? Anybody worth considerin'?"

"He was a good man."

"A showman?"

"That's neither one thing nor the other," replied Bowers. "A man might be a showman and still be a good man."

"Is he dead?"

"Yes."

"And Mary Shelton? Is she dead, too?"

"Yes."

"And Lem Shelton has neither father nor mother?"

"Neither."

"Nor no relations?"

"Oh, he has relatives."

"What kind o' folks are they?"

"They're all right. I'm one of 'em."

"You?"

"Yes; I'm Mary Shelton's brother.'

"His uncle, then?"

"Yes."

"Oh!"

"Now, Mr. Parker, I know that boy you've got and call your son is Lem Shelton and not your son at all, and I guess you know well enough that I know it. Now, why do you lie about it—that's what I want to know?"

"Say, stranger, has that boy got anythin' comin' to him?" asked Parker, warily.

"Why?"

"'Cause if ye answer straight it may make a difference with me in talkin' to ye. Mr. Bowers, I'm a practical man."

"I guess you are. But what has that got to do with me?"

"Thar might be reasons why I'd want to prove the boy my son, an' there might be reasons why I'd like to prove him to be Lem Shelton."

"Well?"

"An' then, ag'in, thar might be reasons why you'd like to have me prove the boy to be my son and there might be reasons why you'd like to have me prove 'im to be Lemuel Shelton."

"Well!"

"I want to know how the land lays, Mr. Bowers."

"Oh, you're surveying."

"Yes; I'm surveyin' so I am."

"Well, I'll tell you what you do, Mr. Parker," said Bowers, at length. "You an' I may as well play our hands fair. I'm no hog and I don't suppose you're one. You come to my room in the America House at half-past two this afternoon and we'll settle the question as to whether the boy is your son or my nephew. Will you be there?"

"Yes."

"All right. But I want to find my other boy, Benny, the one that disappeared from Larnsville yistiday."

"I can't do anything for you in that direction," replied Sim Bowers. "Mr. Parker, if your boy has gone away by advice of any man with this show, I don't know it. He is not with the show here today and did not leave Larnsville with it. I can add that no one of prominence connected with the show is in any manner concerned in his disappearance. Look round if you want to—it will do you good, us no harm."

"What are you to the show, Mr. Bowers? One o' the clowns, maybe. If ye was in the ring, you're too stiff to tumble, I'm sure."

"Well, I'm not a clown. I don't have to tumble. I'm the manager."

"The owner of it all?"

"No; I don't own a stake, and I don't want to. I'm the manager. Don't you understand that a circus is a business and has to be managed like any other business? Do you imagine it's nothing but a picnic? Giving the show is the smallest part of it all. The performance lasts a couple of hours—the business goes on all the time day and night. It goes on when the sun shines and when it rains. There's never any rest and there's never a holiday until the season is over and then, sometimes, there is a prospect of a hard winter. A circus is fun for the Joshes, but it's hustle or die to the circus guys, just that, Mr. Parker. It's all a mistake that circus men go round the country stealing boys to make performers of. We can get more performers than we need. We always carry more people than we can board profitably. We're not traveling about to pick up boys to pay hotel bills for, but to pick up cash. Can't you understand that?"

"It looks plausible."

"It'll look more and more so the longer you think it over," said Bowers. "Now, be on hand. So-long."

"I want to ask a question, Mr. Bowers, right now. It don't have anythin' to do with our talk this afternoon."

"Out with it. I'm in a hurry."

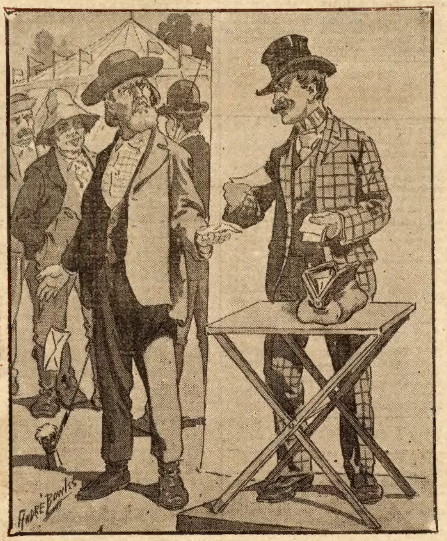
"What do you know about my boy bein' with Bill Brand yistid'y?"

"Nothin' at all."

"Sure?"

"Certain."

"Now, what d'ye know about Bill Brand, anyway? That's one more question."



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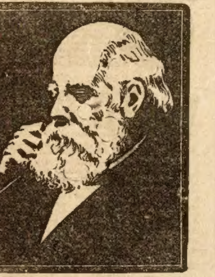

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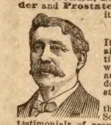

It eradicates every trace of these ailments, in the shortest possible time, and makes you as sound as when a boy. Thousands of men are strictured, more or less, but do not know it. Remove the stricture and you will get well. It will pay you to investigate this greatest and best of all cures. Send for our free booklet and testimonials of prominent men and write them. All correspondence confidential.

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"Well, quite a good deal, yet not so much, after all. I knew him in a business way, years ago. I saw him yesterday at your town. He put me onto the fact that the boy that lived with you is called Lem Shelton. He don't like the boy, because the boy licked him and threw him in the mill-race—they agree on that. Bill was——"

"Yes," said Parker, laughing, "that's so—I seen it myself. Did Bill Brand use to be a showman?"

"No; he and I mined together in California. That's where I knew him. I saved a little of what I cleaned up, and he went through his, and I got him passage round the Horn to New York. He was bad enough; not a thief or a murderer, but a rough, brutal man. Say, if that boy did him up the boy must be a good one. Bill's revengeful, but it ain't likely he'd be able to get any revenge on one boy by doing anything to the other. Do you think it is?"

"That wouldn't seem hardly reasonable," answered Parker. "I wouldn't look to him to think anything so foolish as that. Yet, thar's a story that Bennie was seen goin' back towards home with Brand."

"I don't know anything about it, that's all."

The two parted, to meet again at the appointed time. Their conference was not a long one, but it ended, seemingly, to their mutual satisfaction. They emerged from Bowers' room smiling, and the lumberman's old calfskin pocketbook was thicker than ever it had been before.

"You understand. He's your son, and you're going to call him by your name. So much a month and so much in a lump if he dies and you've been good to him," said Bowers, in a whisper. "Remember!"

CHAPTER XX.

THE VOICES OF THE LAWS.

The disappearnce of Bennie Parker was not destined soon to be relegated to the list of forgotten events in the history of Larnsville and vicinity. Most of the people believed that the boy had "run away with a circus" and would one day come back, not much improved morally or otherwise. A few thought otherwise. There are always those who take the negative side of any proposition that may be argued.

Parker and Tunker busied themselves with the management of the mill, and Lem Shelton went on with his daily task of packing shingles in the shingle room. When he entered the place the second day after the circus had exhibited at Larnsville and sat down at his accustomed task, with the sounds from above ringing in his ears, he thought of Bennie and wondered where the boy was. The slow crunching of the well-filled, wide-set gang-saws, the sharp, quick biting of the broad, glistening single saw in the English gate, the screaming of a circular saw in a knotty log, the shrieking of the little circular edger saw, the rapidly repeated ringing of the wood saw, and the shrill singing of the shingle machines, fell heavily on his ears after his two days' rest, and above them was the clattering humming of the turbine water wheels down in the depths below the mill floor, where cranks and pitmen revolved and plunged up and down ceaselessly, making an irregular cannonading that accentuated the barbaric music of the saw-mill. As the boy worked, all these sounds seemed suddenly to concentrate in a single word:

"Bennie!"

"Just like an awful voice," thought Lem. "Bennie! Bennie! Bennie!"

All day long the name was repeated in that din of industry, and all day long Lem wondered what had become of this nearest playmate of his childhood and boyhood. It was not until late in the following day that Lem forgot what the mill was saying, and, looking about him investigatingly, made a discovery that struck him unpleasantly.

"By pokus!" he cried, "that raftin' rope's gone! I wonder if Bill Brand took it after all. Just like 'im if he got a chance. Old sayin's must be true. Thar's that one about the devil comin' 'round when yer talkin' about him. Too bad lost things—ropes f'r instance—don't do the same thing. Here's Bill Brand, anyway."

Brand came in unhesitatingly and approached Lem, smiling in a sickly way, evidently in assurance that his mission was a peaceful one.

"How de do?" he said, glibly.

"Hello, Bill," replied Lem, spiritedly.

"I s'pose ye miss the other one," said Bill, slowly.

"You mean——"

"The one that run away with the circus."

"Did he run away, Bill?" the boy asked, no less suggestively than earnestly. "Did he?"

"That's the understandin'."

"But there was that story about his bein' seen with you that day."

"All bosh!" cried Brand. "All bosh! You can't find any one that seen us together, 'cept may be meetin' here an' there' round Larnsville that day."

"Well, Uncle Jakey Lickintyler didn't see you an' I must say he sees about everybody that goes up or down," answered Lem. "I want to be fair with ye."

"Course ye do. Yer a squar' boy, Lem, if ye did give me the wust of it. Say, Lem, I'd rather had you do it to me than lots o' men I know 'bout here. You won't go round braggin' about it all the durn time for the next twenty or thirty years. I s'pose yer thinkin' of Bennie most all the time?" Bill asked, as if he found it hard to change the subject. "Mighty hard, likely, Lem?"

"Yes, I do," answered Lem, "an' the boy's name's been sung into my ears all the time. Just lis'en, Bill, an' you'll hear the hull mill a sayin' it in a thousand tongues. Can't ye hear it?"

Bill Brand's red face was pale. He listened, and it grew white. He trembled in every limb, and when he tried to speak his voice failed him.

"D'ye hear it?" repeated Lem.

"Yes; I do—I do hear it. It keeps a sayin' an' a singin', 'Bennie! Bennie! Bennie!' But the old mill can't never call 'im back. He ain't never comin' back; no boy ever does that goes away with one o' them circus troupes. Lem, the old mill might as well go to singin' somethin' else. Bennie won't never come back!"

The man put his hands over his ears and when he took them away, Lem said, sternly:

"Some time you may hear the mill singin' something else. If it can sing, 'Bennie! Bennie!' it can sing, 'Bill Brand! Bill Brand!' or anything else—anything about you an' Bennie."

"About me an' Bennie? Me an' Bennie? Oh, yes, me an' Bennie! Me an! Bennie! How queer, Lem."

"Say, Brand, I want ye to bring back that raftin' rope," said Lem. "If ye don't I may have to lick ye ag'in."

"I can't, Lem. I can't."

"Why?"

"'Cause I hain't got it. Cuss that cannon, Lem! Cuss it! Would ye think a cannon, without powder or ball, jist an old soaked-up lubberly cannon that couldn't possibly be fired off, would kill any one in time o' peace? Would ye think the craziest old good-for-nothin' cannon would go to do that?"

"No," replied the boy. "How could it? I s'pose it's at the bottom of the river yet—I mean the Larnsville gun that you wanted the raftin' rope to git up out o' the mud."

"Likely."

"Do ye want me to help you git it to land, Bill? I said I'd do it."

"Let's wait till jist afore 'lection time. If we got it out now, the Dimmycrats might steal it again an' sink it somewhere else."

"They might," said Lem. "What's up?"

"The voices o' the saws is singin' ag'in, an' it's 'Bennie! Bennie! Bennie!' that they sing. Don't tell no one, Lem. Don't tell!"

"But what hurt would it do for me to speak about that?" inquired Lem.

"What hurt? Oh, folks might think we're crazy, that's all. D'ye s'pose ev'ry one 'ud hear the mill a-sayin' 'Bennie! Bennie! Bennie?' Most of 'em wouldn't hear nothin' but

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Bifkins—What was it?

Mifkins—I dreamed that I was dead, and—

Bifkins—Say, that certainly was a hot one, wasn't it?

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Dear Editor—If any of your readers are suffering from lost manhood, debilitating drains, run down or abused vital organs, sexual weakness, etc., and want a sure, quick cure, tell them to write to me and I will gladly send them a free prescription with full directions for a home treatment in plain, sealed envelope—one that I know will do the work. There is no charge whatever—just tell them to write me in confidence and I will show them how to avoid scheming medical quacks and regain their health without personal embarrassment. Yours respectfully, THOMAS BRADFORD, 415 Bradford Building, Cincinnati, Ohio.

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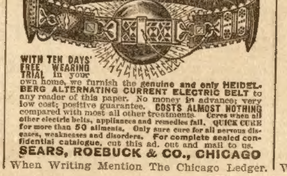

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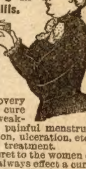

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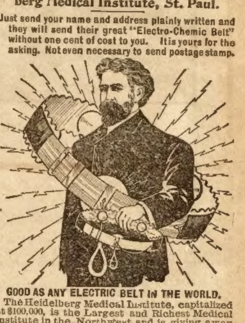

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the spiteful yelpin' an' screechin' an' scrunchin' o' saws jist a rippin' thar way through knots. We couldn't make 'em understand the words at all. We don't want to git no reputation o' bein' daffy, my boy."

"Then," said Lem, "you want to be the only one to hear the saws a singin' about Bennie. Is that it, Bill?"

"The only one! God, no! What put that in your crazy head? Why should I?"

He glared threateningly at the boy, then turned and ran out of the mill, his hands again over his ears.

In next week's Ledger the reader will find another installment of this highly interesting story. Every new subscriber for the Ledger is entitled to our free cameras and patterns, as announced on pages thirteen and fifteen.

Ancient Hard-Luck Stories.

Hanno, the Carthaginian, was sent commissioner by the State after the second Carthaginian war to supplicate for peace and in the end obtained it. Yet one of the sharper Roman senators said: "You have often broken with us the peace whereunto you have sworn: I pray by what gods will you swear?" Hanno answered, "By the same gods that punished the former perjury so severely."

When King Edward II., of England was among his torturers who hurried him to and fro that no man should know where he was they set him down upon a bank and the more to disguise his face shaved him and washed him with cold water from a ditch. The king said, "Well, yet will I have warm water for my beard," and so shed abundance of tears.

Ambassadors of Asia Minor came to Marc Antony after he had imposed upon them a double tax and said to him that if he would have two tributes from them in one year he must give them two seed-times and two harvests.

Fixing the Limit.

The old farmer had reached the stage where it was necessary to comb his hair with a towel, and, meandering into the village drug store, he said:

"Looky here, Mixer, yew indooced me tew blow in a dollar fer a bottle uv yore hair renooer a couple uv weeks ergo, an' it ain't did enny good nohow."

"That's strange," replied the druggist. "I never knew it to fail before. But one bottle is hardly a fair trial."

"Mebby it ain't," said the old man. "Yew can gimme a nuther bottle, but if that don't bring th' answer I'll never drink any more uv th' pesky stuff, b'gosh!"

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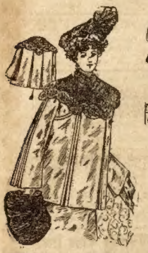
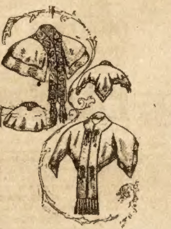
The patterns shown below are furnished us by one of the best, if not the best, pattern manufacturers in New York. They comprise the very latest styles, and are unequalled for accuracy in fit, simplicity in use, and are most economical of material. They sell from the stores from twenty-five to fifty cents each. Full instructions are printed on every pattern. Three months' subscription to the CHICAGO LEDGER for 25 cents and any TWO of these patterns FREE. Six months' subscription to the CHICAGO LEDGER for 50 cents and FIVE of these patterns FREE. This offer is without equal. If you are wise you will take advantage of it at once.

REMEMBER, to avoid mistakes, you must first give the number of the Pattern wanted—second, do not fail to give bust measure for waist, or waist measure if skirt is desired. Unless you do as here stated we will not know what to send you. Also, do not fail to enclose money. PATTERN DEPT., CHICAGO LEDGER, CHICAGO, ILL.


4554 COAT WITH CAPE COLLAR 32-40 BUST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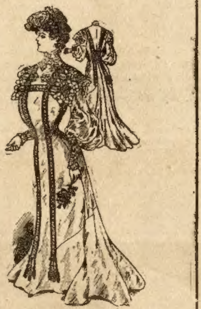
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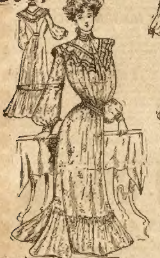
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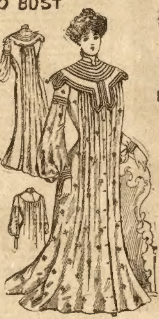
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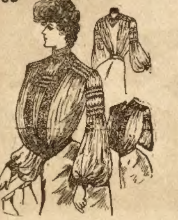
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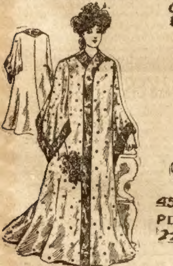
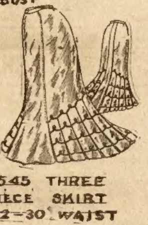
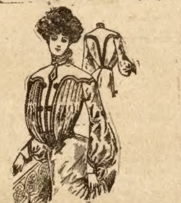

4549 KIMONA SMALL MEDIUM LARGE


4545 THREE PIECE SKIRT 22-30 WAIST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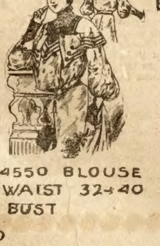
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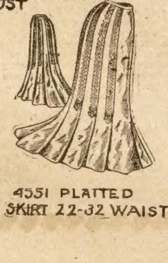
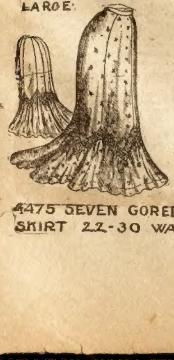

4551 PLAITED SKIRT 22-32 WAIST


4475 SEVEN GORED SKIRT 22-30 WAIST

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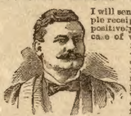
Chief of Staff.

I will send FREE to any man a simple receipt for self-treatment which positively will promptly cure any case of vital weakness, lost vigor, nervous debility, varicocele—whether the result of excesses, dissipation or natural development. It cannot fail. I speak from experience. I was a physical wreck, and it cured me quickly, giving me buoyant freshness and sturdy vitality and vigor with the ambition that raised me from a hardworking shoemaker to a profitable profession. I cured myself, so can any and every weak man. My case was chronic, desperate, but this receipt brought me new life almost instantly. God alone knows how I suffered with weakness and humiliation, and in memory of this suffering I extend the helping hand to my fellow men. Simply send your name and address and I will send the receipt in a plainly sealed envelope and you cure yourself at home, to be a man among men. Delays are dangerous when health, happiness and even life itself are at stake. Write today. Address NORTHWESTERN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, 224 Lincoln Bldg., DETROIT, MICH.

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They Will Send You Absolutely Free One of Their 100 Guage Supreme Electric Belts, the Belt Which Has Made so Many Wonderful Cures—You Needn't Send Even a Postage Stamp, Just Your Name and Address.

Seven years ago the State of Illinois granted to the Physicians' Institute of Chicago a charter.

There was need of something above the ordinary method of treatment for chronic diseases, something more than any one specialist or any number of specialists acting independently could do, so the State itself, under the powers granted it by its general laws, gave the power to the Physicians' Institute to furnish to the sick such help as would make them well and strong.

Ever since its establishment this Institute has endeavored in every possible way to carry out the original purposes of its establishment under the beneficient laws of the State.

Three years ago, the Physicians' Institute, realizing the value of electricity in the treatment of certain phases of disease, created under the superintendence of its staff of specialists an electric belt, and this belt has been proved to be of great value as a curative agent. From time to time it has been improved until it reached that stage of perfection which warranted its present name of "Supreme."

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This "Supreme Electric Belt" is made in one grade only—100 guage—there is no better electric belt made and no better belt can be made. Whenever in the opinion of our staff of specialists the wonderful curative and revitalizing forces of electricity will cure you we send you, free of all cost, one of these Supreme Electric Belts. It is not sent on trial, it is yours to keep forever without the payment of one cent. This generous offer may be withdrawn at any time, so you should write to-day for this free "Supreme Electric Belt" to the Physicians' Institute at 200 Unity Building, Chicago, Ills.

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FOR YOUTHFUL EYES

Salad Dressing.

Maud Muller on a summer's day
Raked the meadow sweet with hay.

The judge came riding by that way
And saw Maud Muller in the hay.

He bowed and said: "How do you do?"
And Maud replied: "Ker-chew, ker-chew."

She blushed just like a little rose
And tugged demurely at her nose.

The hay dust floated on the air
And soon the judge received his share.

His eyes turned red, his nose turned blue
And tremors shook him through and through.

And straightway he began to cough
And then he sneezed his old head off.

Then down the street the old mare ran—
Astride her sat the headless man.

Though Maud looked on, she did not stir;
She knew the judge was dead to her.

She kept on raking new-mown hay
And by-and-by up came a jay.

He pulled his whiskers where he stood
And talked and talked till he made good.

And they were wed that very day,
Maud Muller and the lucky jay.

Hay fever played a sorry joke
By causing that poor judge to croak.

Story of Cape Snakes.

New chums in South Africa need to keep a sharp look-out for snakes, which are very common, and some of which are most deadly. It is said that a strip of horse-hair cloth, with the rough, bristly edge uppermost, nailed across the threshold will prevent them from entering a room or house so protected. A lady once found one in a press coiled up beside the teacups. Another lady, putting her hand beneath the pillow for a handkerchief, drew out a puff-adder. A man, putting his leg into one end of his trousers, was cheered by observing a snake drop out at the other end. Another traveler, who had spent the night on the veldt, found in the morning that he had crushed to death a puff-adder which had crept below his blanket for warmth. Some of these snakes are hideously ugly, and a few of them—unlike most serpents in other countries—will even attack. If one is in front of a puff-adder one is safe, for it cannot strike forward; but if one is behind it one has to be very vigilant, for it strikes backward to a considerable distance, and is singularly accurate in its aim.

Watch of Charles I.

The original watch carried by Charles I. found its way recently to Philadelphia. The famous timepiece was carried by Cromwell himself for years. It is at present the property of Wilfres Powell, the British consul at Philadelphia. The royal watch, which still ticks after a career of 262 years, was made in 1640 for King Charles I. by the royal watchmaker of that time.

It is of the oldest pattern, having been made entirely by hand and costing in its day a good round sum of money. The case is of solid silver ornamented in beautiful pierced filigree work. The outer case is made of copper, with a handsome leather cover, silver studded.

The royal watch runs thirty-six hours with one winding. Only one hand is used to designate the time. There is a silver bell inclosed in the silver case, on which the hours are struck. There is also an alarm attachment. The watch is four and a half inches in diameter and an inch and a half thick. Cromwell kept the watch as a personal possession for years. After the Restoration it fell into the hands of Joseph Kipling, of Overstone House, North Hants, England, an ancestor of Rudyard Kipling. Joseph Kipling was an ancestor of Mr. Powell, the present owner of the watch.

About the Rainbow.

It need not surprise us that the beautiful bow in the sky has always something to do with rain, from which it takes its name. But it is interesting to note that much seems to depend upon the time of day or the state of weather when it appears. According to an old rhyme, a rainbow in the morning warns the shepherds to be prepared for rain shortly, and long; an evening rainbow points to fine weather next day. Sailors believe that a rainbow toward the wind is a sure sign of continued wet; if it come in the opposite quarter, the rain will soon stop. Again, if in fair weather a rainbow be seen, foul weather will speedily set in; but if the bow appear in foul weather, fair weather will be at hand. Virgil would seem to have thought the bow uncommonly dry, for he wrote (as Dryden translates him), "At either horn the rainbow drinks the flood."

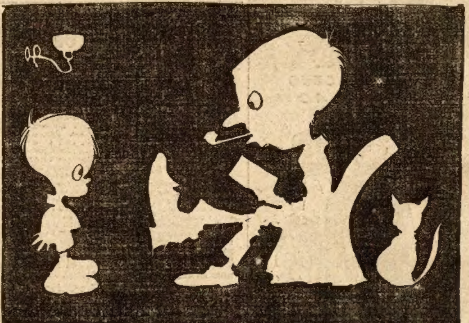
Best Book for Lawyers.

When Macklin, the famous actor came to think of what he should do with his son he decided that he would make a lawyer of him. So the young man entered at the Temple in London, chambers were rented, and a working library was bought.

"And the first book I make him start with was the Bible," said the old actor, years afterward, as he recalled the matter.

"The Bible! The Bible for a lawyer?" exclaimed his friend.

"Yes, and the most proper and most scientific book for an honest lawyer, for it contains the foundations of all law, as well as all morality."



"Say, pop, how much does one from one leave?"
"If it's a divorce case it leaves two."

Nonsense Jingle.

Did you ever see a spider dance a jig?
Did you ever see a robin wear a wig?
Did you ever know a pussy to go to sea?
If you ever did, my dearies, pray tell me.

Did you ever hear a treetop give a shout?
Did you ever see a pavement jump about?
Did you ever dream that pollywogs could sing?
If so, my children, tell me everything.

For I dearly love to know it, if all these things could be.
And it's quite, quite safe and sensible to tell them all to me.
For if I can't keep the secret, I can find some one who can,
And funny things have happened ever since the world began!

ETHEL MAUD COLSON.

Putting Pins in Paper.

One of the cleverest inventions ever patented is the machine for sticking common pins in the papers in which they are sold. The contrivance brings up the pins in rows, draws the paper in position, crimps it in two lines, then at a single push passes the pins through the paper and sets them in position.

A Good Time.

Mr. Bensonhurst—Willie, did you have a good time the week you spent at your grandfather's?

Little Willie—Rather! He let me go out to play without calling me back every time and saying, "Willie, have you got a clean handkerchief?"—Brooklyn Citizen.

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WHEN MAMMY ROCKS Her Little One to Sleep. Words and Music for Piano or Organ. Please Go 'way an' Let Me Sleep. The Saint and the Sinner. Go 'way Back and Sit Down. I Want a Man Like Romeo. Creole Belle. Sally Mine. You Are My Queen. Also the greatest song hit of the season, HIAWATHA, and 33 other very latest songs, including Rag Time, Coon, Comic, Sentimental, Love, War, etc., and the great sensation, ROSEY BELLE, or Put Your Chubby Arms Around Me, words and music. To introduce the above we also Send Free our mammoth collection of Minstrel Jokes, selections for autograph album, tricks for conjurers, including Biting Nails in two and How to Pass a Cord Through a Handkerchief. Learn how to do this and mystify your friends, fully illustrated; also Monologues (the red hot kind), Guide to Flirtation, together with hundreds of stories, jokes, etc. FUN AND ENTERTAINMENT all winter long, and our Mammoth Catalogue of Novelties, books, etc., all for only 10 Cents; Three Sets 25 Cents. Address TROJAN NOVELTY CO., 405 So. Market St., TROY, OHIO.

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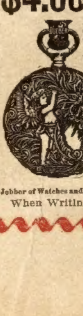

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